ZZAP! 64

A RETRO PRODUCTION
No. 107 MARCH 2002
£0

BLASTING BACK TO YOUR C64 AFTER EIGHT YEARS!

MONTHLY REVIEW FOR COMMODORE SOFTWARE



METAL WARRIOR 3
IT ROCKS OUR WORLD

ICE GUYS
SNOW MEAN ACHIEVEMENT

CRUSH
R-TYPE OF GAME

RETURN OF THE KINGS - LLOYD, ROCKFORD, SCORELORD, AND OL' WHITEY ARE BACK!

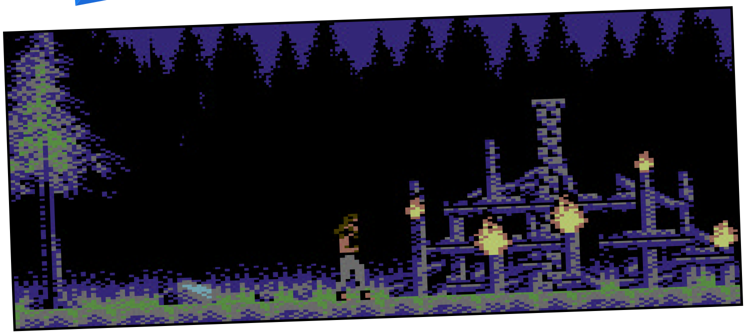
A BRIEF HISTORY OF ZZAP! (WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT, EUGENE?)

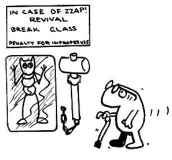
THE TOP TEN C64 GAMES EVER!


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a film by Alex Chandon and Josh Collins
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"...a kinky kitsch extravaganda - Pervirella's a full-on phermone spiked romp that's destined for instant cultdom!" Billy Chainsaw - MensWorld
"Has all the makings of a cult film... quality British fantasy cinema" SFX
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THE FISH DID IT!

ZZAP! ED





REVIEWS RAISED FROM THE DEAD

RESURRECTED REGULARS

FEATURES FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE

Welcome to Zzap! 107. We're sorry about the slight delay since the last issue: this was partly due to technical problems, and partly to a severe bout of amnesia. Since I'm the only ex-editor who doesn't have a life yet, I've been asked to return for one final spell as leader. Hopefully I'll get it right this time.

This latest issue of Zzap! shouldn't be here; but it is, so stop complaining. And it's a collector's item. As you hold these pages in your hands (you have printed this out, haven't you?), please treat them with the same loving care and attention you would devote to, for example, a favoured hamster. We worked long and hard to bring it to you. Some of us sweated blood and cried rivers. Others just sweated and cried. But all of us did it because we loved the magazine throughout its long and successful life.

As you read, the names and faces may seem unfamiliar, but they're all genuinely nice people. Honest. More importantly, they're still incredibly enthusiastic about the C64 scene, even after all these years. Initially I wondered why, but after working with them on this project for several months, I found the answer: they are all stark raving mad. You can read more about them on the Contributors page, at the back of the magazine.

So what's inside this super-deluxe once-in-a-lifetime 36-page special? Plenty. There are reviews of the best and worst games of the last few years, tons of fascinating features, the usual suspects such as Lloyd and the Scorelord, and no Amiga reviews. The rest is in the Contents section on this page, so stop being lazy and read it.

Can I retire now?

Gordon Houghton
(on behalf of Ken D. Fish)

GAMES REVIEWED

ADVERTISERS INDEX

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The views and opinions expressed in this magazine belong to their original authors, and do not necessarily represent those of a sane person or fish.

Cover design and illustration by **Oliver Frey** and **Craig Grannell**

WHAT'S New

THE ORIGINAL AND BEST! ZZAP!64 March 2002

WORLD HAS CHANGED SHOCKER

The world has changed rather a lot since the last issue of Zzap!64 hit the shelves. Grunge is out, disco is in. DVD has replaced CD as the format of choice for elitist snobs. Kylie Minogue became famous. Then unfamous. Then famous again. Yet through all these years the C64 has remained hotter than a big hot thing in an oven set to Really Rather Hot. So, here's a two-page spread of all the movers and shakers that are keeping the 8-bit powerhouse alive nearly twenty years after its debut...

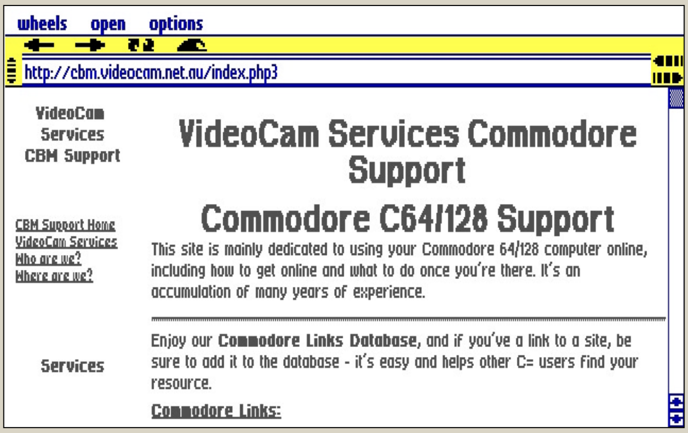
GET YOUR C64 ONLINE

When you think of the Internet, you instantly think of websites, the ability to chat to anyone from around the world, and gigabytes of pornography 'accidentally' landing on your hard drive. Now, thanks to some clever hacking, you too can spend your free time on the Net via the C64.

The *Wave* Web browser works by providing a standard PPP (Peer to Peer Protocol, the basis for most Internet connections) client for your super-fast 2400 baud modem. Hook it up to your phone line, dial a local ISP, and you're free to sit in your underwear and pretend you're a good looking woman in chat rooms. As a typical Web page takes ages to load, some C64 sites are including *Wave*-only pages that contain the same information but without bandwidth-hogging images or tables.

Wave is a great achievement, although don't expect it to support MP3 or *QuickTime* anytime soon...

w: **videocam.net.au/~colinjt/wave.html**





THE SECRET MUSICIANS' OTHER BALL

Not content with rocking out to the tunes of Hubbard, Galway or Daglish through the mighty SID chip, avid C64 music fans have been remixing classic game soundtracks on their PCs (*see "And the beat goes on"—p25*). The phenomenon has gathered such pace that last year it spawned *Back In Time Live*, night-club events devoted to pumping out the best remixes in the presence of the mighty musicians who started it all.

The debut night was in Birmingham and saw Jeff Minter (complete with Nuon player for Virtual Light Machine goodness), Rob Hubbard, Ben Daglish, Tony Crowther, Martin Galway and a plethora of fans swarm to the DNA club, where everyone grooved away to classic remixed tracks until the wee small hours.

Fun and drinks were had by all, except for a reporter from Edge magazine, who was apparently too 'cool'.

The next event will be held at Gossips in London on June 21, 2002 and will include appearances from one of the ex-*Bits* girls, Press Play on Tape (a live C64 covers band), Ben Daglish, and the usual mix of high score shenanigans and retro oddness.

w: **www.c64audio.com**

LEGAL OR ILLEGAL?

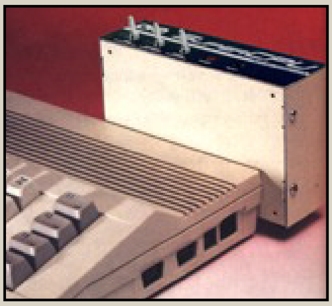
(THAT IS THE QUESTION...)

In this age of emulators and freely-distributed disk images, high-profile C64 games creators have made their games available on the Net. Jeff Minter (*Sheep In Space*, *Attack of the Mutant Camels*) and Gremlin Graphics (*Jack The Nipper*, *Monty on the Run*) have given the all-clear for their back catalogues to be distributed online. But not all companies are so generous. Rare (better known to C64 fans as Ultimate Play The Game) issued cease and desist orders to sites hosting copies of its titles, as did First Star Software (creators of *Boulderdash*), and Lucasarts. As Rare often resurrects its oldies—*Sabrewulf* on Game Boy Advance, for example, or the inclusion of Spectrum *Jet Pac* as a hidden game in *Donkey Kong 64*—it's understandable that they want to protect their property. But we'd love to hear why the others are doing it...

w: **www.magicnet.net/~yak**
w: **gremlinworld.emuunlim.com**

IT'S FASTER THAN LIGHT (WELL, ALMOST)

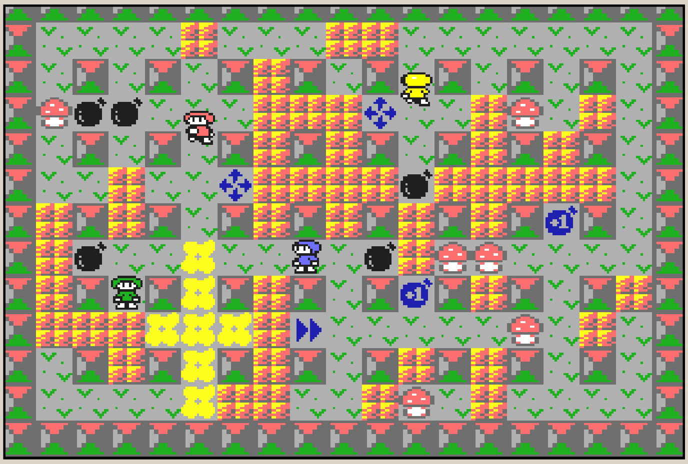
A Commodore 64 running at 20 Megahertz, twenty times the normal speed? Surely that's impossible? Well, the Super CPU, consisting of a cartridge-style add-on device, makes it a reality. Not only does it speed up sluggish 3D games such as *Total Eclipse*, *Driller* and *The Last Ninja*, it can also be used for adding extra processor-hungry effects to games such as the awesome new shoot 'em up, *Metal Dust*. Hopefully this will usher in a new age of C64 game development now that the limitations of a notoriously slow processor have been removed.



w: **www.cmdweb.de**



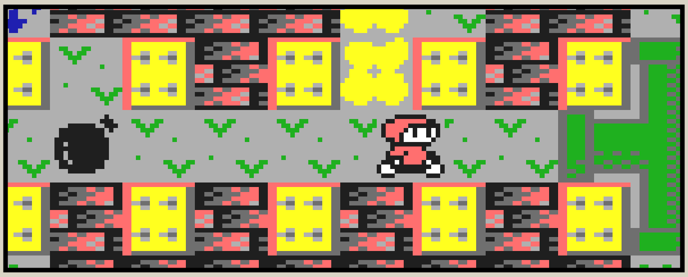
- ***Metal Dust* running on a Super CPU-enhanced C64.**



THE JOY OF STICKS

Four-player C64 games are rare, and typically involve people huddled around the keyboard playing titles such as *BMX Simulator*, or passing the joysticks around in a confused manner whilst battling with the Epyx *Games* series. Now, thanks to those innovative lads at Protovision, four players can each plug in a joystick and get playing at the same time. *Bomb Mania* is the first game to utilise the "multitap"-style device. It's an impressive clone of *Bomberman*, with players running around a claustrophobic maze while throwing explosives at each other. How about a new version of *Gauntlet*, guys?

w: **www.protovision-online.de**

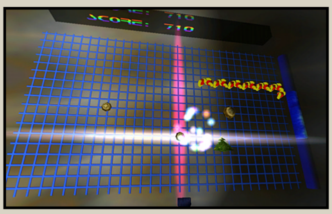


RETURN OF THE YAK

As you may have heard, Jeff Minter—of frenetic shoot 'em up and furry beasties fame—was sadly dumped from the Nuon project. This cloud has a silver lining, though. Jeff is restarting Llamasoft and plans to do PC (and maybe Mac) updates of his many classics. As he says, this is one last crack at 'writing games that don't take megabytes of RAM... decent, enjoyable, unpretentious games'. This will be a shareware venture, so support the man before he's forced to program shoddy PS2 sequels for a living (and if you don't pay up, we'll send round Ol' Whitey to turn you into a frog).

Jeff's not the only one working on Llamasoft updates, either. Kooldog has released enhanced PC versions of several Minter games, some of which are now available in the shops at budget price, but with maximum playability. So, erm, buy those, too.

w: **www.llamasoft.co.uk**
w: **www.kooldog.co.uk**



2002 CDs?

Well, maybe not 2002 CDs for 2002, but there are quite a few on the way. Chris Abbott must sometimes wonder what he unleashed with the original *Back in Time*—a selection of C64 tunes remade with modern equipment. Since then, we've seen two impressive sequels, Reyn Ouwehand's *Nexus 6581*, and Zombie Nation pinching a chunk of *Lazy Jones* to top the European charts. The coming year looks like it will be even better for C64 music fans.

First up is *Karma64*, which is available now. This eclectic CD shows what happens when the *BIT* team lets its hair down, and includes innovative remixes of *Arkanoid*, *Miami Vice* and *Revenge of the Mutant Camels*. Future C64Audio.com releases may include a *Last Ninja* tribute, *Back in Time Live* and, eventually, *Back in Time 4*.

Outside of the *Back in Time* stable we can look forward to *Remix64* ('80s-themed, including an amazing *Green Beret* cover from Thomas Detert), Instant Remedy (thumping dancefloor 'toonz'), *Nexus 6581* vol. 2 (Johannes Bjerregaard covers) and CDs from remix.kwed.org regulars Makke, Marcel Donne and FTC. Meanwhile, Press Play on Tape's studio set of live C64 covers was released in December, with raw and edgy pieces showing off the massive diversity of the C64 remix community in fine style.

w: **www.c64audio.com**
w: **remix64.phatsites.de**
w: **www.pressplayontape.com**

SIZZLER

METAL WARRIOR 3

Electric Harem, free, keyboard and joystick
• Amazing headbanging action in a world gone mad!

The life of a post-apocalypse metal band member is tough. Kidnappings, government conspiracies, insane groupies—even a jaunt to the local Axes 'n' Amps boutique means you have to pack more arms than a military surplus store... Enter the troubled group, Cyber-Priest. Their history is fraught with danger, forbidden love and shoulder-length hair.

In the first game in the series, a young metal upstart called Ian worked his way into the band, and stumbled upon a fiendish and sinister plot. He eventually thwarted the maniacal plans of the insane Dr Ultrashed to create the 'Chaos Symphony', thereby saving the world. He also rescued the beautiful Phantasm, the female complement to Cyber-Priest. Naturally, Phantasm thought Ian was well hard.

She later returned the favour, as trouble brewed once again and she battled on the streets of Sub-City to find her new love. Although triumphant, the core of Cyber-Priest inevitably fell apart. Filled with bitterness, each member went their own way.

The introduction to this latest instalment sees Ian and Phantasm patching up their relationship in the log cabin of former friend and band member, Goat. Unfortunately, their copious alcoholic consumption is disturbed when the government sends along a little air-to-surface housewarming gift. Goat manages to escape, but Ian and Phantasm are captured. Time to call in some favours!

So, yet another Cyber-Priest member plays the lead role in liberating metal and mankind. Initially you take control of Goat, he of dark sunglasses and grumpy disposition. Your first step in saving Ian, Phantasm and the not-so-free world is to recruit allies—up to five, including *Metal Warrior* regular, Detective Hammer. After that, you guide your team through many locations, blasting everything as you go. Conversations with locals help you unravel the dastardly secrets of the latest threat.

As you battle the baddies, your currently selected team member gains experience points. By working out at the local gym you can improve your vital statistics, each subsequent improvement costing proportionally more experience. Boosting your stats helps increase your team members' reaction times, jumping heights, damage recovery and how much punishment they can dish out.



• Moments before Goat gets shot out of the sky by the end-of-level mothership!



Being a self-deprecating heavy metal fan myself, I was quite looking forward to this game—and the humorous intro struck a chord, promising good things to come. Right from the start, it's apparent that Metal Warrior 3 **is extremely well presented. The instructions are comprehensive, the control method is easily grasped, and the screen layout is very appealing and uncluttered. Graphically though, it's a bit of a mixed bag. The backgrounds range from average to very good, and some of the sprites are a bit iffy, but the animation is decent—Goat goes about his task like a true Metal Warrior, hair flowing in the breeze. The music, although not very 'metal', is varied and adds to the atmosphere. Unfortunately, it's not all good news. The collision detection could certainly be more generous, and the game is initially much too hard. Perseverance reaps rewards though, and it's obvious that there's more to this game than the average arcade adventure.**



• Happiness is... a hot chick with a warm missile launcher at dusk



• **While storming a compound, Detective Hammer regrets hiding the dog biscuits**

Soon you have a formidable gang that leaves a trail of destruction in its wake!

Fallen enemies conveniently empty their pockets, providing ammo, weapons, medikits or credits. Keeping your team's bank balance at a healthy level is important, as bars and weapon stores are always willing to sell you a cold brew, or the latest in automatic firearms, at a reasonable (or not so reasonable) price.

If one of your team succumbs to the onslaught, you can choose another member to continue the fight. Fallen comrades take approximately a day to recover. This brings us nicely to the game's passage of time. As you travel around the apocalyptic locales, night falls—bringing out even more brazen and deadly thugs, punks, and other nasties. Shops and clubs open at various times, and critical events can occur at precise moments, so it's important to watch the clock from day to day.

So, have you got what it takes to survive with SMG in one hand and a guitar in the other? Welcome to the future, my friend. It may be deadly, but you know they've got one hell of a band!

My first reaction to Metal Warrior 3 **was 'yet another beat 'em up'—but after a couple of plays it becomes apparent that the programmers have added a vital twist with the RPG element. Crucially, it gives you a reason for running and kicking your way through the later levels. The graphics and collision detection are adequate for the genre, and the music fits the action well, but unfortunately there are no bone-jarring sound effects. My main reservations are that the gameplay is a little monotonous, and there's an easy move which lets you defeat the vast majority of enemies. Overall a good, highly polished game with a novel twist—just lacking a bit in the challenge stakes.**



This game's technical quality is pretty impressive. It pummels you to the ground and kicks you in the head a couple of times for good measure. Although the sprites seem to have devolved back to Metal Warrior 1's **standards, the graphics are still outstanding, with varied scenery and bad guys. The game is also a complete aural delight, with so many thumping good tunes I was awe-struck. Gameplay-wise, it expands on the RPG overtones of its immediate predecessor, allowing you to gather experience for your entire group. This adds an intriguing and crucial strategy element, as you try to balance their skills to best aid progress. The impact of day and night cycles is a great touch too, and adds yet another level of strategy. I do have some niggles with the initial difficulty level, and the controls can be confusing in the midst of a firefight, but these problems aren't insurmountable. Congratulations, Electric Harem, you have successfully rocked my world!**





• **Look, mummy: a mountain Goat**

PRESENTATION 90%
Comprehensive instructions, humorous intro, excellent screen layout, and nice control method. Pity about the cumbersome interface, though.

GRAPHICS 88%
Beautiful backdrops and sprites, good animation and pleasant day/night effects. A touch of sprite flicker lets the side down, and the scrolling is a little odd.

SOUND 89%
Solid effects and electrifying, atmospheric music!

HOOKABILITY 77%
Overly difficult beginning alleviated by a cool story and frenetic blasting fun.

LASTABILITY 92%
A huge map, multiple (improvable) characters and loads of weapons means you'll be playing for a long time.

OVERALL 90%
Unbelievably good fun, with a wicked war-metal twist.

SHAOLIN

Jon Wells, free, joystick

The old man looked down at the pupil kneeling before him.

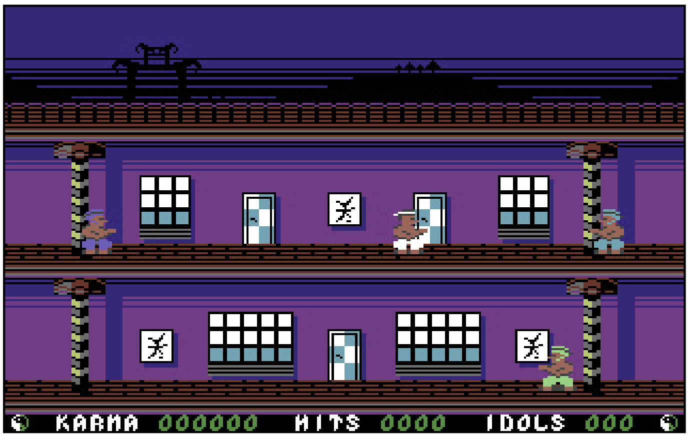
'You have done well, my son,' he said proudly.

'Thank you, Master.'

'However, I have one more task for you, before your time here comes to an end.'

'Master?'

'There is a temple across the hills that is said to contain the greatest treasure in the world, which is guarded by the fiercest fighters known to man. The treasure is a myth, a fabrication designed to make mere mortals jealous of its status. However, it does contain precious idols that were stolen many years ago, from within these very walls. It is your duty to enter that temple and recover as many of those idols as possible. Only then will you be worthy of the title 'Shaolin', my son.'



• **Right, which one of you wimps wants me first?**



Jon Wells says that he spent all of four days putting Shaolin **together, but it really doesn't show. Whether it's the colourful combatants walking across the static backdrop, or one of the many small speech samples used for that authentic Kung Fu feeling, this game has polish. It's very easy to play, with all moves accessed quickly and responsively. The fact that you only have one life is an interesting twist, and means that one false move can end the game there and then. However, the structure is limited and unvarying, so all you usually end up chasing is a new high-score. Overall, however, this is a well-built and solid little game. Just don't expect the initial thrill to last that long.**

And so it begins. *Shaolin* echoes the old arcade game, *Shaolin's Road*, and features a similar style of action to its classic predecessor. However, unlike the arcade version, the combat is limited to a single static screen rather than a scrolling area, and there are no extra power-ups.

The temple has three levels and you can jump between them at will. Patrolling these platforms are various nasty guards and foes, all of whom are capable of dispatching you with a single blow. You have three defensive moves to keep them at bay while you search for the idols: punch, kick, and flying kick. Choose the right one and you'll knock out your enemies quicker than you can say "Hand me those nunchukkas, Bruce". Points are awarded according to the type of move used.

After a period of time, or when a specific number of opponents have been dealt with, an idol appears somewhere within the temple. You must reach that idol before it disappears—but be careful, because your foes are waiting and will do everything in their power to stop you.

Don't be afraid. Always remind yourself that you must not fail the Master...





Shaolin**'s title is slightly misleading. I was expecting something along the lines of** The Last Ninja**, but instead got** Knucklebusters **minus the scrolling. The graphics are bizarrely cute (if little better than average), but the sound is extremely good, with a couple of great oriental tunes and some brilliant sampled effects. The agonising scream as an enemy falls to his death is particularly entertaining. Gameplay is great fun—for the first few minutes, anyway. Longevity is a serious problem with this game, because there's only one level, and it goes on indefinitely until the player dies. The fact that you only get one life doesn't exactly help matters—a single mistake is punished with the game ending. The addition of a large map and a few brain teasing puzzles could have made this a classic. As it stands, there's just not enough here to keep me interested.**



This is loosely based on the arcade game, Shaolin's Road**, but Jon Wells has woven his usual magic to make the basic original more addictive and enjoyable. For a start there are samples aplenty, with good, crunching kicks and shrieks from your guy as the fisticuffs ensue. Gameplay is simple but compelling—you just can't stop yourself taking on three men at once as they walk in line below you. You can also tailor the action to your own fighting style, so that if you die it's usually down to your own incompetence rather than impossible odds. It's just a shame there are no other screens and no final goal. Maybe in** Shaolin 2**, John?**

• **Hang on, haven't I seen you somewhere before?**



PRESENTATION 67%
Simple title screen, high-score table, and some nice touches (such as the background changing colour every game).

GRAPHICS 72%
Colourful, attractive scenery overlaid with nicely-animated and characterful sprites. Just that one screen, though...

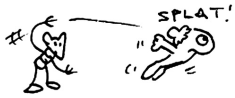
SOUND 89%
Two very good oriental tunes, and outstanding sampled in-game FX.

HOOKABILITY 83%
Great fun, once you get into it.

LASTABILITY 43%
Despite the obvious challenge, the lack of levels and unvarying gameplay mean interest wanes disappointingly quickly.

OVERALL 70%
An enjoyable, no-holds-barred martial arts game that's too simple for its own good. Far better than the original conversion, though!





ICE GUYS

Protovision, £10, joystick

When most people think of snow, they tend to imagine long days spent outside, making snowballs, ice skating, and soaking up the atmosphere of frozen water particles. Unfortunately for the Ice Guys, the only thing they'll be doing all winter long is trying to overcome an alien invasion. And wouldn't you just know it? You're the one who's been summoned to help them out.

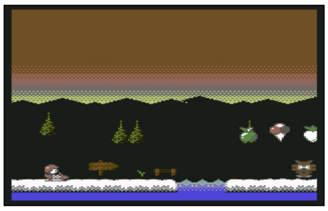
Ice Guys is a platform game which lets you use the snow lying on the ground to defeat Earth's would-be invaders. You can grab a handful of the white stuff and transform it into a snowball by holding down the fire button. Throw it at a nearby enemy however, and your weedy weapon is turned into a giant snowball, capable of causing megadeath.

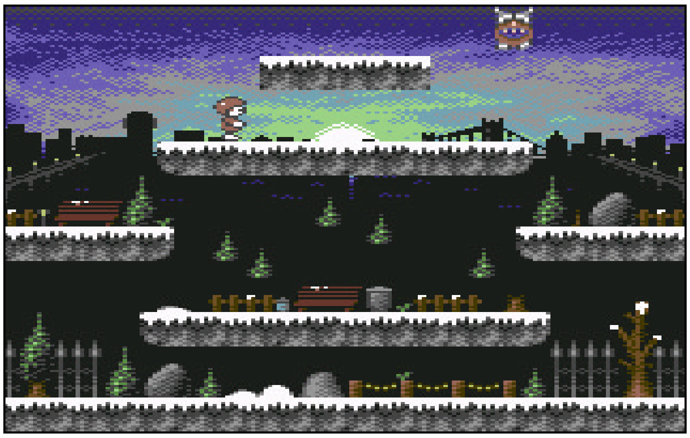
The game plays a lot like *Bubble Bobble*. Each level features a single screen filled with layered platforms. The cute-but-deadly aliens roam around these platforms randomly, usually appearing just where you don't want them to. If any of the little blighters come into contact with you, you lose a life. The more levels you complete, the tougher the aliens get—which basically means you have to chuck a whole bunch of snowballs at them before they fall.

For extra style points, you can create combo attacks by pushing snowball-covered enemies down the platforms into other enemies. If you perform this trick correctly, you're rewarded with stars, diamonds and various candy-themed treats.

Collect ten stars and you're whisked away to a bonus mini-game, featuring friendly snowmen who need to be rescued from certain peril. Diamonds, on the other hand, can be spent in conveniently-placed shops—you can buy special items such as snowmen heads, which instantly vaporise all on-screen aliens. Candy, of course, is yummy when you eat it, but terrible for your waistline.

Two people can play the game simultaneously, helping each other clear the screen as quickly as possible, and then fighting to get all the bonuses. But whether you play solo or in a team, always remember—there's no business like snow business.





• **You'll not laugh with a snowball in your mush**



• **"I'll have a 99, please."**



Ice Guys **is immediately eye-catching, with its bold, colourful graphics and jaunty music. It's also fun to play initially—simple platform action, with lots going on. However, after extended play, it becomes apparent that it's the same throughout. It gets repetitive quickly, with each screen being merely a case of 'clear the rather unimaginative baddies'. The music, which is fun to begin with, also gets repetitive, as does the bonus game, which breaks up the platform action but soon becomes annoying. Having said all this, the game as a whole does play well. There are lots of levels and the two-player mode is often quite a laugh... It's just the lack of variety that kills it in the end.**



This plays very much like Bubble Bobble, **except this is set in snowier climes. The object is to defeat all the bad guys on the screen and progress to the next. Sounds easy, huh? It isn't. The programmers decided to make things hard from the start, and it doesn't get any simpler. The first few games might see you hit Continue before finishing three levels, but once you've learnt the enemy AI and figured out what each weapon does then things become easier. The graphics are bright and colourful too, despite being variations on a mainly white theme, whilst the sound is a suitably loud accompaniment. In short, fun to play—and it will definitely keep you coming back for more.**



I really, really like Ice Guys**. Right from the moment the ultra-slick title screen appears you know that a lot of care has been lavished on this game. The action itself does not let your first impressions down—you get tight controls, fun levels and great graphics. At first the high difficulty level is off-putting to all but the hardest ice-throwers, but once the subtle art of snowball building is mastered, the game becomes addictive. The international setting gives rise to a plethora of attractive backdrops that are matched by the cute and cuddly sprites, making this one of the best looking C64 titles of recent times. The two player mode, bonus games and saveable high score are just the icing on an already appetising cake.**

PRESENTATION 89%
Single and team-play options, highscore table and useful in-game help screens. No pause mode, though.

GRAPHICS 85%
Detailed hi-res backdrops, populated with innovative enemies and a cute main sprite.

SOUND 77%
Powerful music in the presentation, appealingly subdued tunes during the game.

HOOKABILITY 72%
Starts hard and gets harder.

LASTABILITY 85%
Persevere and you get a lot of game to play with, including bonus stages, snowball fights, and a great two-player mode.

OVERALL 83%
A platformer with plenty to offer—excellent stuff.



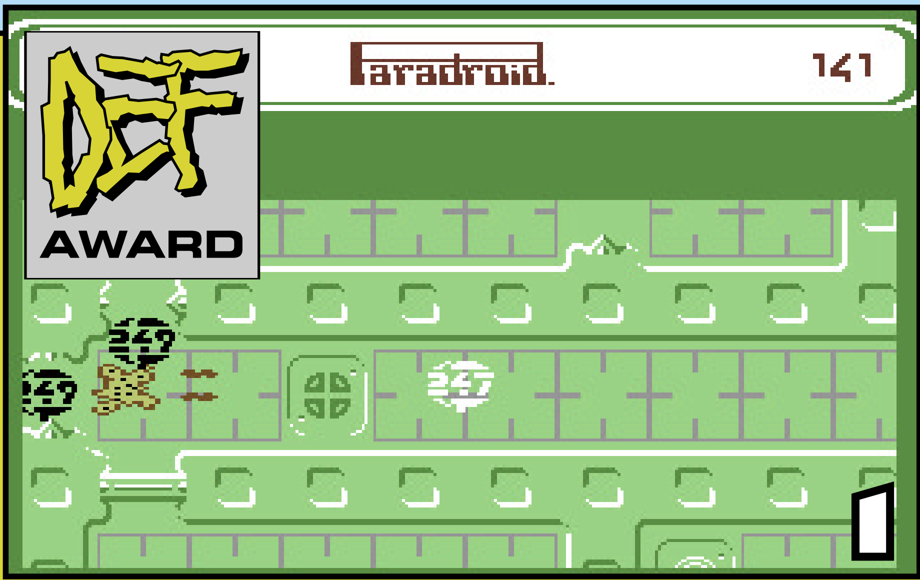
GUIDE TO...

THE BEST C64 GAMES EVER!

You voted. We compiled. And here are the results—the ten best C64 games ever produced, along with our personal selection of the ten biggest turkeys...

PARADROID

Hewson



• **Andrew Braybrook's classic, *Paradroid*—the best Commodore 64 game ever...**

Andrew Braybrook's classic shoot 'em up scored a massive 97% back in Issue 7. Zzap! had chronicled the game's progression in a diary, which led some readers to conclude this might have had some bearing on the Gold Medal award. They couldn't have been more wrong—if anything, *Paradroid* may well have been under-rated.

The game begins with a briefing: a fleet of ships has been bombarded by radiation from an uncharted asteroid field. Their robot crews have been activated, and have killed all human crew members. To make matters worse, the ships are heading for enemy territory. The results could be disastrous for mankind.

The solution is simple: beam aboard a prototype 'influence device'—the Paradroid of the title—and destroy every robot in the fleet. Although your droid is slow and weak, it can temporarily attach itself to more powerful droids via a unique subgame. This allows you to seize control of their hardware—essential when tackling decks full of military robots.

There is something about *Paradroid* that sets it apart from other C64 games. Pseudo-3D effects add to the atmosphere, and the droid profiles when logged onto a console are an excellent touch. Almost flawless, the mixture of strategy and blasting within a mere 64K makes this classic something really special.



WIZBALL

Ocean

Sensible Software's bizarre shoot 'em up has become one of the most acclaimed C64 games of all time. How it missed a Gold Medal back in Issue 27 is beyond us, but we suspect it was due to Gary Penn being a miserable bugger.

After all, with its dazzling graphics, burbling sound effects, cracking (and suitably 'trippy') title tune and unique, frenetic action, even a score of 96% seems an injustice. And, yes, we still wonder if Wiz is a bit colour-blind, too...

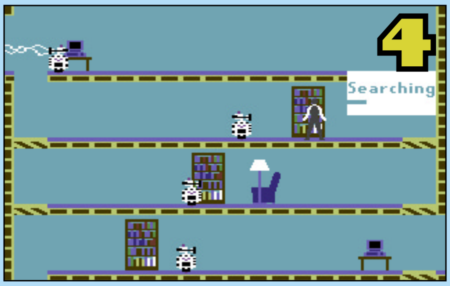
ELITE

Firebird

This epic space trading game boasts legions of fans world-wide, and has spawned dozens of PC-based tributes. However, few come close to matching the original's combination of intergalactic commerce and seat-of-your-pants dogfights. It gives you sole control of an underpowered cargo ship in a massive galaxy full of merciless pirates, zealous police, and deadly Thargoid craft...

Although a little sluggish compared to the BBC Micro original, the C64 conversion positively oozes atmosphere—and managed to scrape a Gold Medal in the very first Issue of Zzap!, way back in 1985. An essential in anyone's collection.



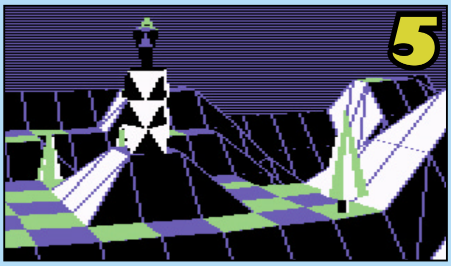


IMPOSSIBLE MISSION

Epyx/US Gold

This platformer holds a fond place in many gamers' hearts. Unsurpassed to this day (Lara who?), it combines pixel-perfect leaping action with brain-taxing puzzles and a compelling storyline.

The graphics and sound still impress today, particularly the speech, such as the blood-curdling scream the agent emits when falling through holes in the floor! Arriving before Zzap! existed, *Impossible Mission* was duly granted a Past Blaster award in Issue 25, scoring 95%.



THE SENTINEL
Firebird

One of the most innovative games ever, this Gold Medal winner had the unusual distinction of a Zzap! review with no ratings. Deemed too different from anything previously released, the editor decided it was unfair to compare it against other software.

The Sentinel is an original mix of chess-style action and pre-Freescape 3D graphics. While moving around the thousands of landscapes and avoiding the deadly gaze of the eponymous Sentinel isn't a speedy task, it's compulsive nonetheless. The password system ensures the game never becomes tiresome, and it remains a firm favourite of a certain Mr. Houghton to this day.

INTERNATIONAL KARATE
System 3

There were karate games before *International Karate*, most notably *Way of the Exploding Fist*. What made this particular *Karate Champ* clone sizzle in Issue 14 was simply that it outshone its competition in every way. The graphics were clearer, the movement faster, and the game didn't suffer from the one-move-kills-all syndrome that afflicts many beat 'em ups.



Bonus games, a genuine difficulty curve, and one of Rob Hubbard's best ever compositions assured it a permanent place in C64 history—and a 91% rating in Zzap!64.



MERCENARY
Novagen

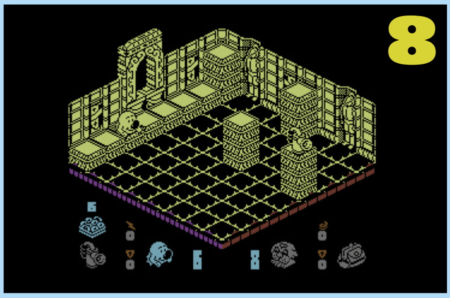
Whereas *Elite* gives you a galaxy to explore, *Mercenary* is firmly planted on terra firma. When your ship develops a mechanical fault, you crash land on the planet Targ, a barren world with a single metropolis. The planet's two races are in the middle of a war, so you have to bargain with them, trade items from underground complexes, and find a way off this battle-ravaged rock without getting killed in the process.

Mercenary's graphics proved that the C64 can handle fast vectors, and the combination of puzzle-solving and exploring kept most gamers happy for weeks. This was a worthy Gold Medal winner, scoring a massive 98% in Issue 11.

HEAD OVER HEELS
Ocean

Despite its monochrome backdrops and sparse sound effects, Ocean's isometric 3D romp was another Gold Medal winner, also scoring 98% in Issue 28.

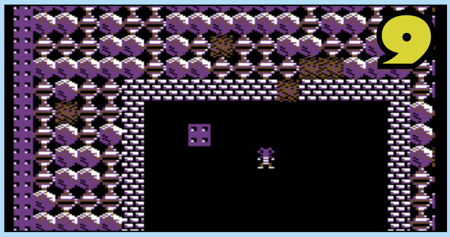
The aim of the game is to bring about the fall of the evil Blacktooth empire. Your two characters—Head and Heels—are initially separated, so you first have to work out how to get them together. After this, their respective powers combine to great effect, allowing you to explore dozens of rooms, map huge complexes, solve puzzles, avoid enemies and steal valuable crowns... Great fun, and a true classic.



BOULDERDASH
First Star Software

The original and best gem-munching game contains dozens of levels, with hundreds of diamonds to collect, traps to avoid, and nasties to crush. The first in the series was never reviewed in Zzap!, but most of its sequels were awarded over 90%.

The combination of arcade and puzzle action may not look or sound like much, but *Boulderdash's* maddeningly addictive gameplay still has fans banging their joysticks in frustration today.



THRUST
Firebird

Who says budget software is rubbish? This £1.99 *Gravitar* clone shocked everyone in Issue 13 when it was awarded 94%.

Forget the ropy graphics—realistic physics, addictive gameplay and a great Hubbard soundtrack are just a few reasons to persevere beyond that initial frustration barrier.

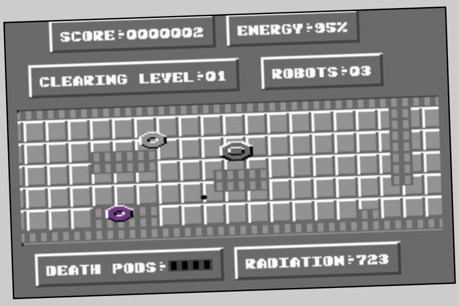


AND NOW... THE VERY *WORST* C64 GAMES EVER!

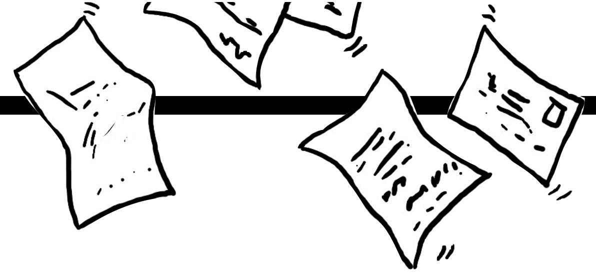
It's inevitable that some games are good and some are bad. However, some are so appalling that you'd think special effort had gone into producing such abhorrent piles of garbage. We asked the Zzap! team to name and shame what they considered to be the games they'd gladly lock in a vault, never to see the light of day again. This, in alphabetical order, is what they came up with...

Aargh! Condor
Bionic Granny
Bob Winner
Double Dragon
Dragon's Lair (cassette)
Enduro Racer
Highlander
Robobolt
Skaterock
Street Fighter II

So there you have it: *Paradroid* (97%) reigns supreme, and *Robobolt* (3%) still makes our team want to gouge out their eyes (or at least those of the programmers). Maybe those old reviewers knew what they were talking about, after all...



• ***Robobolt*—less fun than flu**



ZZAP! RRAP



Is it really 2002 already? It seems like only yesterday that I was writing rude replies to Space Chickens, and dandling Gary Penn on my knee. The past decade has literally whizzed by in a very fast car travelling at full throttle—but whatever the year is, it will always remain a pleasure for me to pick up my quill and answer your Commodore 64-related queries. Speaking of which...

ZZAP!64 CASPER 1

Dear Lloyd,
I'm Casper, I'm one year old, and I'm your biggest fan. I'd like to know if I'm the youngest ever Zzap!64 reader. I rip my father's mint issues to shreds when he doesn't pay attention. I think I'd better go now and finish my copy of *Jack the Nipper*.

Casper Fidelio, Netherlands

I think your daddy might have helped you with that message, Casper. In any case, welcome to the wonderful world of Zzap!64... And yes, apart from Kati who has a mental age of six months, you are the youngest reader we've ever had.

LM

RETROMANIACAL

Dear Lloyd,
I want things back the way they used to be. Everything was simpler back then—at least in my suburban, child-like world it was. I knew where I stood with my blocky graphics and chunky SID tunes, waiting five minutes for a game to load, only for it to crash, then fiddling with the little screw on the datasette head, making painstaking quarter turns until finally it decided to work...

I don't stubbornly maintain that those old games were better. Ninety percent of them were rubbish, and of the ones that were great, most look pretty decrepit today. But us old timers know that there's much more to the classics than mere cosmetics. They still throb with innovation, stunning concepts and playability—because the ideas were great. Programmers had to be innovative to squeeze the most out of the humble 64 and help it to achieve the seemingly impossible; and with only one joystick button, control methods had to be innovative too.

That's what today's market lacks: ideas inspired by hardware limitations. In fact, the opposite now seems to be the case. Games often look and sound great, but play badly. With systems that offer a seemingly infinite capacity and potential to produce stunning software, what contemporary gamers are left with are trite imitations of past glories

Martin Kelsey

I couldn't have put it better myself. So I won't try. However, in defence of modern programmers, I think that the very best games of today are far better than anything we played twenty years ago.

LM

SPECCY FOUR EYES

Dear Lloyd,
Why bother with another issue of Zzap!? The C64 has been dead for years, no one cares about it any more, and it's time to move on. The Spectrum was the better machine back then anyway. Commodore owners were just a bunch of sad losers.

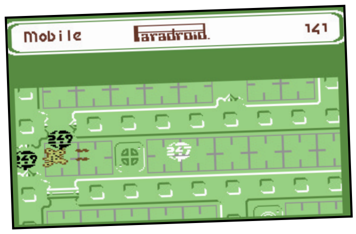
Anonymous

I once had a dream in which all Spectrum owners were impaled upon huge spikes, but after many years in psychiatry I have come to realise that this was a sick fantasy. Or, to put it more succinctly: go back to your cave, you half-wit.

LM

MOURNING THE MULLET

Dear Lloyd,
When I heard Zzap! was rising from the grave, I was overjoyed. But after a while I found myself wondering how much the magazine's readers had changed since that last issue. Would they still complain that 'Game X' had scored too high/low? Would they moan that the new reviewing team was too lenient/harsh/ugly? Do they mourn the passing of Zzap!'s heyday, a time when the mullet was king, stonewashed denim was considered trendy, and Shakin' Stevens dominated the charts? Do they find themselves occasionally lecturing hapless thirteen-year-old children on how 'video games aren't like they used to be when I was a lad', pointing out that despite all the anti-aliased 3D flashiness of today,



there still isn't anything to touch *Paradroid*? Do Zzap!'s many followers do these things, or am I the only sad old git left who looks back through glasses of such a rose-tinted variety?

Jamie Williamson, York

No, you're not the only sad old git—the twelve of you should get together for dinner sometime. But you're right about *Paradroid*: there's still nothing to touch it.

LM

WIZBALL ON THE WEB?

Dear Lloyd,
Is the C64 the future of online gaming? Think of it, most games fit into a nanospace—well, 64K—when many Web page graphics are larger than that. I've tasted the online games available at **www.lemon64.com** and **www.alphaflight.web.ag** and they show what can be streamed in real time. No waiting for glossy front ends, no hassle with compatibility issues that have dogged PC games for the past ten years. Imagine two-player versions of *The Sentinel* where you have to race to get to the top first, or *Wizball* where someone thousands of miles away plays the cat...

Simon Hadlington, UK

To a limited extent, I agree. PC owners already enjoy good multiplayer experiences on the Web—and as bandwidth improves things can only get better. However, there's an argument for putting C64 classics online, particularly for people who want quick, neat, and simple gaming that's also completely free.

LM



ANETHER LOTTER

Dear Lloyd,
How has be youself? Y'know i still wish i was a young blighter, marching into the computer games shop and picking up a new c64 title while on my way purchasing the latest express copy of Zzap! (i be in antipodean land y'see)...

Ahh the memories... Sticking a tape into theol' C2N, pressing SHIFT/RUN STOP and pressing play on tape, and waiting for about 5 minutes as it loads in the game with a really cool loading tune by Martin Galway and seeing the loading screen and colour bars flashing while breezing through the newly bought magazine...

Ahh the memories... Sitting on the floor with joystick in hand (no sick comments here please) blasting aliens or jumping over things and climbing ladders while drinking a nice cool glass of softdrink...

I just wanna thank Zzap! and, infact all the other magazines and software companies and of course Commodore for giving me a good child/teenage hood. The C64 actually kept me out of trouble, instead of hanging out with the local naughties, i was usually home playing *Ghosts'n Goblins*! And now, to great support sites such as **zzap64.co.uk**, commodore wire (fellow antipodean!), lemon, arnold and the many many many more who are out there, letting us relive ourselves and themselves too.

Patrick M, Sydney, Australia

Your English teacher should be thrown into a shark-infested sea, but your reminiscences are much appreciated—and it's nice that we kept you from slipping into a life of crime. I wish I could say the same about all the ex-Zzapers, but sadly, Robin Hogg was recently arrested for not working in the computer industry anymore.

LM

THE DRIVELLING GROVELLER

Dear Lloyd,
Please print this letter and slap a 'Letter of the Month' moniker on it, because I'd like to receive some free software or a T-shirt.

There's been a severe problem with deliveries of Zzap! to Australia of late. In fact, it's been about seven years since the last one. You need to improve distribution to the remote regions...

I'm also having a bit of trouble with my 64—I can't find it! Can you help me? Now, you better make that smarmy remark at the bottom of this letter damn good, because you've had aeons to think about it!

Barry Leek-Branch, Australia

Did you make up that name, or were you born with it? Either way, you have my sympathies. You should know better than to ask for a free T-shirt, because I'd never give one to someone who grovels and gripes as much as you do. As for your C64, a dingo got it.

LM

MORE BANANAS

Dear Lloyd,
So you thought you'd heard the last of bananas? Well you haven't. As a banana myself, I have to warn you that I plan to paint the entire world yellow by next Christmas. Not only that, but I intend to pass laws banning everything that's straight, including flagpoles. I am not crazy.

A. Banana, Bananaland

This correspondence is now closed.

LM



SNIPS

BITS AND BOBS FROM THE BOTTOM OF THE BAG

EMULATION NATION

Do you prefer emulators, or the real thing?

Ulrich, Graz, Austria

If I can be bothered, the real thing. If I can't, emulators. The same goes for the rest of my life.

LM

PREACHING TO THE CONVERTERS

Do you think *Half-Life* will ever be converted to the C64?

James Pavey, Solihull

Take your pick from these three answers:
1. No, don't be stupid.
2. Yes, and *Bob Winner* was the best C64 game ever.
3. Well, I've just seen *Doom* converted to the GBA, so anything's possible.

LM

CU LATER

Commodore User is a better mag than yours. It's sensible.

Anonymous, UK

Commodore User is dead, you fool. Long live Zzap!

LM

A PERVERT WRITES

Whatever happened to the *Game Over* nipple? One day it was there, the next it was replaced by a badly drawn space-age bra.

Trevor Storey, Newcastle

Sad, isn't it? I come out of retirement expecting intelligent debate about emulators, the retro scene or Zzap! history. Instead, I get some nutcase writing about sex. Trev, get back to the clinic as soon as possible.

LM

ZZAP! #108?

Dear Lloyd,
What can I say? A brand new issue of Zzap! When I first heard about it, I thought I must be hallucinating. The fact that the whole thing is under the guidance of one of Zzap!'s original and better editors (quote © the Gordon Houghton Fan Club, a small but dedicated group of slightly scary people) is the icing on a very sumptuous cake. But what I really want to know is: is this really a one-off, last-ever issue? I accept that the C64 scene couldn't support a monthly release, but how about once a year?

Marlon Kassaliss, Liverpool

It's nice to see that Gordon has at least one fan, but I suspect you're on your own. As for the possibility of future issues, that all depends on whether the band of lunatics involved in the current one decide they can stand to work with each other again. Maybe, maybe not...

LM

It's time once more for me to don my Paisley dressing gown, stick a meerschaum in my mouth, and relax in my favourite armchair before a roaring fire. Should there ever be another issue of this hallowed magazine, I will rise again; but for now, I bid you all a fond and slightly sticky farewell.

Lloyd Mangram

A BRIEF HISTORY OF...

Sit ye down, me hearties, and Iain Black will tell ye the scurvy tale of a games magazine, esteemed above all others on the seven seas and beyond... Aha-harrr... *(Cough)*



On April 11th 1985, Zzap!64 burst upon the C64 magazine world and changed everything. At a time when other publications were mostly focusing on technical topics, Zzap!'s intensive and authoritative games coverage coupled with its chummy attitude immediately set it apart from the crowd and made it a seminal games magazine.

Zzap!'s publisher was Newsfield, a small and relatively new company based in the rural English town of Ludlow, Shropshire. It started life as a mail order supplier of ZX Spectrum games, but in January 1984 Newsfield's mail order catalogue metamorphosed into a news-stand magazine called Crash. Crash was a plucky little publication with an intelligent fervour for the subject matter and a level of detail that proved it took games as seriously as its readers did. After Crash established itself as a hit, Newsfield decided to turn its attention to the next growth area within the home computer games market, the C64. At first the magazine was going to have the ill-advised name 'Sprite and Sound', but this lacked the snappiness and sparkle of a title like Crash... So 'Zzap!64' was born.



Initially, the editorial team consisted of Chris Anderson (editor), Bob Wade (assistant editor), Gary Penn and Julian Rignall (both staff writers—referred to as 'joystick junkies' in the launch issue) with Steve Cooke freelancing as resident adventure guru, The White Wizard. Chris, Bob and Steve moved over from a multi-format magazine, Personal Computer Games, when it closed. Gary and Julian had both been finalists in a PCG competition to find Britain's greatest gamer, so they were natural choices for reviewers.





• **Chuck Vomit took over the adventure column in issue 43 having eaten the previous host for lunch.**

The new staff set themselves up in Yeovil, Somerset, from where they produced the first three issues of Zzap!. However, the Newsfield management decided that establishing a new magazine in Crash's image was going to be difficult when it was being written and edited in an office almost three hundred miles away. The editorial team moved up to Ludlow, minus Chris and Bob. Newsfield MD and former Crash editor, Roger Kean, took over at Zzap!'s helm.

Zzap!'s impact on the market was dramatic. Its first six-month ABC circulation figure of 42,000 made it the biggest-selling C64 magazine in Britain, beating the aloof musings of Commodore User and the hardcore technotedium of Commodore Computing International. Just as Crash had won over the Spectrum fans, C64 gamers appreciated Zzap!'s no-bull reviews and the sense it gave that the reader was part of a community of gamers and game industry stars.

Under Roger Kean's guidance, Zzap! flourished, growing in size and influence into another flagship title for Newsfield. By mid-1987 the ABC circulation figure was above 77,000 copies per month. By this time Roger Kean had stepped back to let Gary Penn take over the editor's seat. In turn, Gary Penn moved on to found the multi-format Games Machine magazine with Graeme Kidd, turning Zzap! over to Ciaran Brennan. After a brief tenure in the editor's seat, Ciaran left, giving Julian Rignall his shot at running the mag. It was under Julian's editorship that the magazine was forced into a slight change of identity.

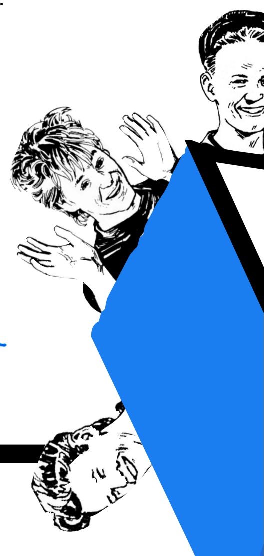
During 1987 it became apparent that players were starting to upgrade from their C64s to 16-bit and console games. Tough times would lie ahead for a C64-exclusive magazine so, to test the water, the December 1987 issue included a 16-page supplement featuring reviews of 16-bit games, both for the Commodore Amiga and the Atari ST. Debate raged in the Zzap! Rrap pages on the merits of such a change, but there was no denying that readers were interested in video games' next evolutionary stage. Nor was there any denying that the essential C64 game advertising funds that had supported the magazine thus far were now starting to dry up, while the Amiga advertising market was growing fast. If Zzap! was to remain competitive, or even viable, it would have to embrace change. As of October 1988 Amiga reviews would be a permanent feature of Zzap!64/Amiga.

In July 1988, after being with the magazine since its inception, Julian Rignall joined rival publisher EMAP as deputy editor of Computer and Video Games, leaving new editor, Gordon Houghton, to oversee one of the most difficult periods in the magazine's history. The Christmas 1988 issue was the biggest Zzap! ever, but by early 1989 software houses were focusing on 16-bit and console games, and it was beginning to look like the C64 was soon to be put out to pasture.

Nevertheless, the introduction of cover-mounted tapes helped keep a more slimline Zzap! afloat for some time. June 1991 finally saw the removal of Amiga reviews altogether, restoring the 64-exclusive content. The August '91 issue actually had thirty-seven C64 game reviews, and there was even some exciting news of the 'C65'—a C64-like device that had additional power to rival the Amiga. There was a renewed sense of enthusiasm in the Zzap! world.



• **Some insane people and various thingies**













- **Oli Frey's art always meant Zzap!64 stood out on the newsagents' shelves**

Then something unimaginable happened. The November 1991 issue of Zzap! didn't appear, and it was announced that the publication was no more. After a string of ambitious magazine ventures Newsfield was forced to close its doors.

It wasn't quite the end, though. A team of Newsfield directors raised the finance to found Europress Impact and revive Zzap!. However, the magazine that rose from the grave was some kind of zombie version—now that older gamers had abandoned their C64s, Zzap! had to play to a younger, less discerning audience. The design became increasingly childish, emulating rival magazine Commodore Format. The writing hit a low ebb, typified by the terrible 'Lash 'n' Bash' taking over the letters page from Lloyd Mangram, spraying answers with innuendo despite the magazine's younger readership. Officially, Issue 90, dated October 1992, was the last Zzap! to appear.

Amazingly, in January 1993 Zzap! did rise once again—albeit briefly—when it was relaunched as Commodore Force. This 'new' magazine was definitely an improvement over the latter issues of Zzap!, and under editors Steve Shields and James Price, something of the original's flavour evolved.

However, with the C64 market on its knees it stood little chance commercially. Later issues of Commodore Force were little more than collections of nostalgic features, re-reviewing games from years gone by. Issue 16 (Zzap! 106) has got to be the only games magazine without any game reviews! Europress Impact closed before Issue 17 appeared, and after nine years of entertaining Commodore gamers, Zzap! was finally laid to rest… until now.

Zzap!'s lasting influence isn't hard to find (just look at all the information available online about it) and its issues are like historical documents, describing the growth of a multi-billion pound game industry, started by guys in their bedrooms. There's nothing like it today, so let's raise a glass to the much-missed heyday of games mags. Here's to you Zzap!64...



- **A selection of ex-Zzap!64 people looking happy and joyous—even Gary Penn**

FEATURE

EMULATION HEAVEN

Sheep have nothing to do with emulators—which is lucky, because Maff Rignall knows absolutely nothing about sheep. However, when we asked him to review the best C64 emulators available, he responded quicker than a ewe on roller skates. Take it away, Maff...

CCS64 v2.0 Beta

Shareware, $30 US

This is the benchmark C64 emulator on any platform. It uses a keyboard-driven menu system with plenty of options, most of which are set-and-forget. Changing disks is easy—much quicker than with a real C64.

The emulation itself is great, though the default colour set appears to be a little off. There are a few sticking points—some of the hotkeys are awkwardly placed, for example—but these niggles do little to detract from a great program. Check it out.

VICE 1.7 / WinVICE 1.7

DOS / Windows, free

VICE, which emulates a variety of 8-bit Commodore machines, also uses keyboard-driven menus, but inserting disks is fiddly, and during testing the shortcuts didn't work. Its unique feature is the supposedly impressive *ReSID* sound emulation engine, though personally I prefer the standard sound output.

WinVICE is basically the same as its DOS counterpart, but with a mouse-driven GUI. This is only available in windowed mode however, so you need to exit the full-screen view to change anything—annoying. There are good points, though. *WinVICE's* hotkeys actually work, and include a proper warp mode (hooray!). The windowed mode also has a nice info panel, showing emulation speed and disk drive information.

Despite a few flaws, both versions are worthy competitors for *CCS64*.

Linux VICE 1.7

Linux, free

Penguins don't have to miss out on all the fun. *Linux VICE* has its own custom GUI—however, it's awful, and by far the worst interface of all the emulators here. Changing disks is excruciating.

This version appears to be quite buggy, too. *ReSID* sound skips about once every ten seconds, screenshots create blank images, and the display is garbled on lower resolutions. To top it all, it sometimes crashes in DGA mode, locking up the machine. Overall, *Linux VICE* needs some serious attention.

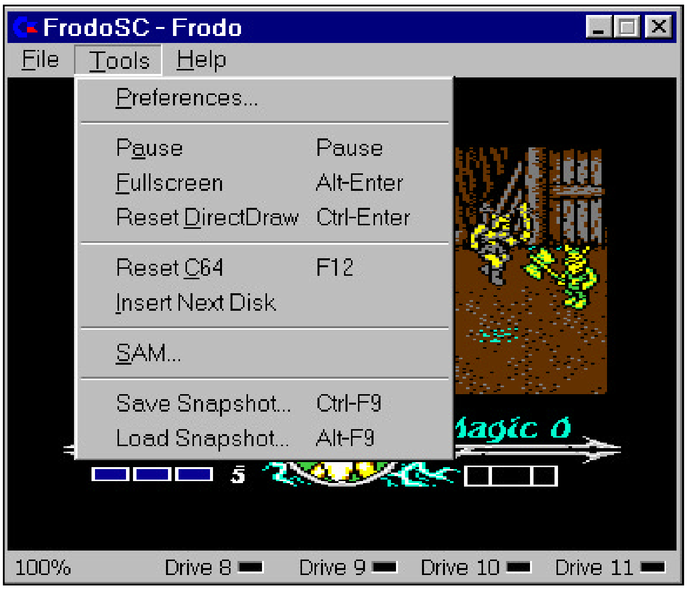
FRODO v4.1a

Windows, free

Like *WinVICE*, *Frodo* uses standard Windows file requesters. This makes changing disks extremely fiddly, and you need to exit full-screen mode before you can get into the options. However, one advantage it has over its rivals is the TV-style blurring you get when the window is expanded.



• *CCS64*, Clyde Radcliffe and a bunch of options



• ***Frodo***—**we don't like it all that much. Sorry...**

In terms of features, it lags behind *VICE* and *CCS64*. There's no warp mode, and joystick emulation is mapped to the keypad, making simultaneous two-player games impossible. *Frodo* originated on the Amiga, and it shows. It has serious catching up to do before it can compete.

Full *ReSID* support, an accurate colour palette (although you can select alternatives from other emulators) and excellent compatibility prove its technical competence. The interface is totally intuitive—disk and file management is as simple as organising files in the *Finder*.



• ***Power 64*** **running** ***Frankie Goes to Hollywood***

POWER64

Mac, shareware $25 US

There aren't that many C64 emulators for Macs. Luckily *Power64* is one of the best there is.

A fast G3 or better is required for advanced features such as anti-aliasing and running several C64s at once (if that takes your fancy), but even with the shareware fee Mac users should check this out right away.

OH, OH, I WANT ONE...

To get your grubby mitts on one of these emulators point your browser at the following websites:

CCS64: www.computerbrains.com
VICE: www-2.cs.cmu.edu/~dsladic/vice/vice.html
Frodo: www.uni-mainz.de/~bauec002/FRMain.html
Power 64: http://www.infinite-loop.at/Power64/index.html
Linux VICE: www-2.cs.cmu.edu/~dsladic/vice/vice.html

That should give you enough ideas to go out there and start emulating for yourself. It beats flogging a merino any day (*speak for yourself—Ed.*)



After several failed attempts to conquer the known universe in recent years, I find myself cast once more in the humiliating role of "Scorelord" to a bunch of quivering invertebrates. When will you half-wits ever learn? Rather than sitting in front of your emulators for hours on end, you could be reshuffling your intellect with a Vim 'n' Dom cocktail, or rearranging your brain cells by inhaling the chlorine from a Mr Muscle foaming tablet. But what bovine activity do you idiots choose instead? Playing games until your hands fall off... Frankly, you disgust me—all of you. Even the sadomasochists. Read the scores and get off this page before I kill you.

ARMALYTE (Thalamus)
2,277,000 Ahriman, UK
128,600 Simon Allen, UK

BOULDERDASH (First Star)
2,227 Arac, UK

BOUNDER (Gremlin Graphics)
776,278 Ademir Cortes, Aus
219,089 Paul E. Morrison, USA
194,745 Kati Hamza, UK

BUGGY BOY (Elite)
90,640 Syntaxerror, Germany
88,970 Craig Grannell, UK

DAVID'S MIDNIGHT MAGIC (Broderbund)
145,520 Syntaxerror, Germany

DELTA (Thalamus)
97,130 Ahriman, UK
75,090 Gordon Houghton, UK

DROPZONE (US Gold)
503,030 Gordon Houghton, UK
110,430 Dan, Aus
78,120 AJ, USA

GALAXIBIRDS (Firebird)
86,640 Kris, UK

GREAT GIANA SISTERS (Rainbow Arts)
60,232 Syntaxerror, Germany
49,415 Das Meer, Switzerland

HADES NEBULA (Nexus)
132,600 Tobias Hultman, Sweden

HERO (Activision)
164,684 Rik, Ireland
160,301 Craig Grannell, UK

HUNTER'S MOON (Thalamus)
109,850 Gordon Houghton, UK
10,525 Anthony Stiller, Aus

IK+ (System 3)
250,300 Peter Roddan, UK
182,800 Tobias Hultman, Sweden
149,600 Tom Simons, Belgium

IO (Firebird)
251,760 Ademir Cortes, Aus
90,740 Ace, Germany

MANIC MINER (Software Projects)
20,774 Ademir Cortes, Aus

MEGA APOCALYPSE (Martech)
50,890 Jay, UK

MONTEZUMA'S REVENGE (Parker Bros)
151,150 Gordon Houghton, UK
108,470 Andy Symons, UK
18,200 Brian Gann, UK

NEBULUS (Hewson)
9,875 Simon Allen, UK

OH NO (Firebird)
871,640 Paul E. Morrison, USA

PACMANIA (Grandslam)
466,630 Das Meer, Switzerland
232,840 Syntaxerror, Germany
213,810 Tom Simons, Belgium

PAPERBOY (Elite)
9,400 Das Meer, Switzerland

PARADROID (Hewson)
30,260 Craig Grannell, UK
25,410 Wusel, Germany

PARK PATROL (Activision)
73,530 Paul E. Morrison, USA
28,480 Kati Hamza, UK

P.O.D. (Mastertronic)
464,380 Rik, Ireland
447,960 Paul E. Morrison, USA
420,900 Jay, UK

RAINBOW ISLANDS (Ocean)
699,190 Paul E. Morrison, USA

RETROGRADE (Thalamus)
106,740 Ahriman, UK

RICK DANGEROUS (Microplay)
32,830 AJ, USA
26,110 Andy Wood, UK

SALAMANDER (Imagine)
104,785 Ahriman, UK

SLAMBALL (US Gold)
805,100 Tom Simons, Belgium
429,770 Jay, UK

SLIMEY'S MINE (Firebird)
134,900 Leigh Bennett, UK
37,800 Glen Madeira, USA

SUPER CYCLE (Epyx)
124,620 Danny Rawlins, Aus

TETRIS (Mirrorsoft)
41,608 Craig Grannell, UK
15,159 Tom Simons, Belgium
5,634 Jay, UK

THRUST (Firebird)
219,650 Steve Robb, UK
125,950 Gordon Houghton, UK
59,150 Tobias Hultman, Sweden

TURRICAN (Rainbow Arts)
892,860 Syntaxerror, Germany
128,440 Andy Wood, UK

TURRICAN 2 (Rainbow Arts)
3,746,980 Syntaxerror, Germany

URIDIUM (Graftgold/Hewson)
145,930 Paul E. Morrison, USA
77,180 Tobias Hultman, Sweden
34,430 AJ, USA

VOIDRUNNER (Llamasoft)
929,378 Jay, UK

WIZBALL (Ocean)
999,999 Ademir Cortes, Aus
736,450 Craig Grannell, UK
366,990 Maff Rignall, Aus

ZENJI (Activision)
15,415 Paul E. Morrison, USA
12,135 Jay, UK
11,880 Brian Gann, UK

For the latest scores, visit my online domain at:
www.the-burrow.freeserve.co.uk/zzap/scorelord/scorelord.html



ZZAP! TECH

Mort's Techie Bit in the Middle

Stephen 'Mort' Stuttard gives you the low-down on disk drives, and delves into the arcane world of three-way cartridge port extenders—all while balancing an egg on his nose.



Plug and play

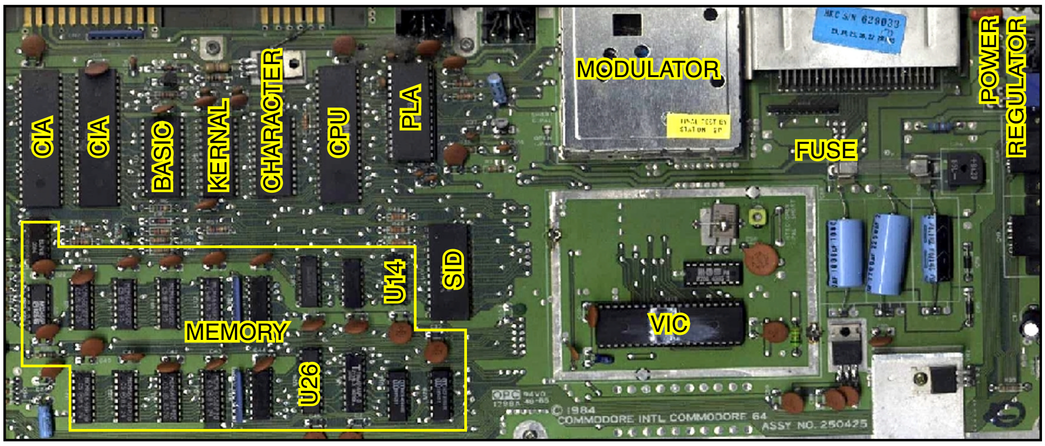
If you own several cartridges—for example, the Action Replay, Expert, and Freeze Machine—a three- or four-way cartridge port extender is a useful addition to your C64 set-up. A couple of decent models are available. The CMD Three-way Port Extender can turn cartridges and all eight datalines on or off independently—all you do is plug in the cart, switch its dip switches to 'on', and it boots. This can be handy if you're using specialist cartridges like EPROM burners, which often have tracks that need to be switched independently; or if you want to stop two carts conflicting (for example, a Tib drive and Action Replay cart). Its main rival, the Datel Multicart Extender, does a similar job with just a single three-way switch (i.e. without the flexibility of being able to access all eight datalines). Both are good solutions, but due to its good build quality and all-round versatility (including an in-built reset switch), the CMD gets the thumbs up.





What's up, doc? Learn how to fix a duff C64...

Your C64 is knackered—but don't panic! Most faults can be rectified if you have an understanding of what the symptoms indicate. If you know which chip is at fault, swap components from a spare. On old C64s or early C64Cs, these can be levered out with a non-magnetised flatbed screwdriver; on newer machines they might have to be de-soldered. Here's a picture of the Commodore's innards, with captions detailing faults and their likely source.



Fuse
Power light on, but no picture. If re-tuning your TV doesn't work, try changing the internal fuse.

Power Regulator
Repeated blown chips; system crashes with multicoloured display, or wavy display, or black/white bands; unit completely dead with no LED lit.

RF Modulator
No sound (6581); colour washed out, or grainy picture.

Memory
Blank screen or OUT OF MEMORY error on power up (6510, 6567, 8251); powers up with block graphics instead of characters (chip at U26 74LS373); powers up with corrupted display and blinking cursor (chip at U14 74LS258).

Sid (6581)
No sound, or missing channels (RF modulator).

PLA (8251)
Multicoloured letters; character lettering incorrect or not displayed (6526,6569-7,901225-01); incorrect screen colours (6569/7); flashing colours or blocks.

CPU (6510)
Cursor jumps around screen; garbled characters; system does not reset, or RESTORE key does not work; machine resets itself, or programs do not load; cassette problems (motor keeps running, runs slowly, screen blanks on pressing play, or causes cursor to disappear); DEVICE NOT PRESENT error when disk drive attached (6526).

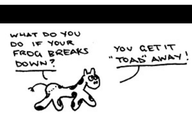
VIC (6569 PAL) (6567 NTSC)
Character lettering incorrect, or not displayed (6526); incorrect screen colours.

CIA (6526)
Cursor invisible; keyboard behaves erratically (Basic Rom); joystick does not work correctly (also check underside of game ports for loose connections); character lettering incorrect or not displayed (8251, 901225-01); DEVICE NOT PRESENT error when disk drive attached (6510); disk drive keeps searching but fails to find file; user port does not work.

Character Rom (901225-01)
Character lettering incorrect, or not displayed (8251, 6526, Memory).

Basic Rom (901226-01)
Syntax error appears when machine is left on, or machine resets itself (6510); keyboard behaves erratically (6526); POKE command does not work; cursor invisible (6526).

All repairs are carried out at your own risk. Many thanks go to Ian Perry, who wrote the *Commodore Diagnostician*; and to Ray Carlson, who wrote *Ray's C64 Problems Solved*.



Disk drive dilemmas

Many people own at least one disk drive for their C64, but it's often useful to get another—either as a spare, or to attach to a PC for file transfers. To help you choose the right one, here's a brief overview of the most popular units currently available.

1541 Mk1

This classic C64 drive was the mainstay of the market from 1982-86, and it is still readily available. It certainly looks the part if you want the full retro experience and have an early Commodore 64.



Pros
- Cheap and plentiful
- Reasonably easy to get spare parts (and you'll need to)
- Most compatible drive around—runs all protected software

Cons
- Very large
- Can overheat
- Frequent misalignment, causing FILE NOT FOUND/DRIVE NOT READY errors
- Noisy—some 1541s sound like cement mixers!
- Not easy to change the drive number

1541C

Less common than the 1541 and the later 1541 Mk2, this drive came out to match the new style 64C (both have the same livery). It was produced from 1982-90.



Pros
- Reliable
- Improved 'handle'-type insert mechanism
- Self-realigning on start-up

Cons
- In-built power supply leads to occasional overheating
- Same large size as 1541 Mk1
- Parts are hard to find

1541 Mk2

Responding to criticism of the size and overheating problems of earlier models, Commodore produced a drive with a separate power supply and smaller footprint. This was also the first unit with drive number switches on the outside. Produced from 1989-96.



Pros
- Small
- Very reliable—and self-realigning
- No overheating problems (separate power supply)
- Drive number easy to change through dip switches

Cons
- Somewhat expensive, compared to other units

Oceanic

Also called the Excelerator+, Evesham Micros' 1541-compatible drive was the first to have an external power supply and small footprint (later copied by the Mk2). Also the first to have drive number changing dip switches on the outside. Produced from 1987-94.



Pros
- Very quiet, with good mechanism
- No overheating problems
- Drive number changing dip switches
- Cheap—not an official Commodore product
- Snazzy LED which changes colour from green to red when drive is accessed

Cons
- Varied reliability
- Build quality could be better—casing is poor
- Incompatible with some software (e.g., *Netherworld*, *Gunship*, *Defender of the Crown*)

Tib/UDD

The Tib/Ultimate Disk Drive first appeared in 1992, late in the life of the C64. Similar to the 1581 model, produced by Commodore around the same time. Unlike the other drives under review, it uses high-density 3.5" disks, and runs off the cartridge port.

Pros
- Small, well built and robust
- Disks store 700Mb of data
- Copies software from the PC directly onto MS-DOS compatible disks
- No power supply—uses the C64



Cons
- Only usable with one-part games/demos
- Needs a 1541 or compatible PC to transfer images—you can't transfer from cassette with cartridges, because the port is in use!
- Can affect the C64's power supply

Other stuff

A couple of other units are probably worth a mention. Firstly, the 1571, which is the same as the 1541 Mk2 but has high-density support for the C128; and the Quick Data Drive, which uses wafers (tapes) rather than disks.

Of course, it's all very well to learn about what drive you want, but then you have to actually go and buy one. As it's unlikely you'll be able to nip down to your local Dixons, we'd suggest buying second-hand, either via fanzine adverts or on the likes of eBay.

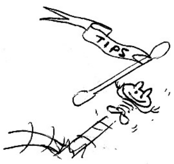
However, there are some unscrupulous people out there, so we've put together some top tips on getting hold of a second-hand drive.

1. Check that all leads and power supplies are present.
2. Ask to see the unit running before parting with your cash.
3. Take a couple of original disks to check the alignment.
4. If only the drive is for sale, take a C64 along with you—it might take a few minutes to set up, but you can barter the price down if the drive is faulty.
5. 1541s can be expensive due to their weight, so add £10 ($17) for postage.

And the winner is...

For the standard C64, the 1541 Mk2. It has all the best features of the other units, while being very reliable and easy to replace: it's also a little more expensive, but you get what you pay for. If you're a C128 owner, go for the 1571—it's an excellent buy.

ZZAP! TIPS





Ahoy there, Gaming Inepts! Warren Pilkington here, welcoming you to this terrific two-page spread of tasty tips, luscious listings and prawn-flavour POKEs. There's something for everyone, whether the game is fresh-from-the-pod or way past its sell-by date. There are some pea-sized passes for *Pieces*, scrumptious codes for *The Sentinel*, a munchable *Metal Warrior 3* listing, and many more mouth-watering morsels! So part your lips and tuck in to this pleasing platter...

PIECES
(Paranormal Activities)

Later levels of this cute puzzler are tough. If you can't get past that irritating ninth stage and want to see what the tenth is like—or want to be a maniac and jump straight to the mega-tough last one—then here are all the codes you'll need.

Level	Code
2	SIKCEM
3	OYARIM
4	AMCVKA
5	HOSAFR
6	PIRASA
7	IPNECI
8	OROSPV
9	HIYART
10	GERZEK
11	LIMPAR
12	KUMPIR
13	NANELI
14	HESNIK
15	KILOPE
16	VGVRVM
17	JANETT
18	MAYKIL
19	EJDERA
20	POLIST
21	VHRVKI
22	KBSTTS
23	CENNET
24	DIYAFR
25	BOMBAM
26	RAMBOM
27	GHOULS
28	HENRAY
29	HEAVYH

METAL WARRIOR 3
(Electric Harem)

This is far from an easy game, but it *is* rewarding—and at least there's a 'continue' feature. However, initially it can be a little difficult to get any weaponry and survive on the minimal energy you're given, so this cure does the job nicely. Not only does it provide your characters with infinite energy, but also infinite use of weapons. Nice!

```
0 REM METAL WARRIOR 3 HACKS BY WAZ
1 FOR WA=679 TO 758: READ Z: C=C+Z: POKE WA,Z:
NEXT
2 IF C<>8851 THEN PRINT "ERROR!": END
3 PRINT CHR$ (147); "INSERT MW3 DISK AND PRESS
SPACE"
4 POKE198,0: WAIT198,1: SYS679
10 DATA 169,001,168,162,008,032,186,255
11 DATA 169,002,162,206,160,002,032,189
12 DATA 255,169,000,162,000,160,000,032
13 DATA 213,255,169,208,141,116,004,169
14 DATA 002,141,117,004,076,052,003,077
15 DATA 042,169,221,141,081,005,169,002
16 DATA 141,082,005,076,032,005,169,234
17 DATA 141,015,076,141,016,076,169,169
18 DATA 141,188,060,169,064,141,189,060
19 DATA 169,234,141,190,060,076,000,164
```

Those of you with an Action Replay or similar cartridge might like just to type in the POKEs instead:

POKE 15548,169:
POKE 15549,64:
POKE 15550,234 (*infinite energy*)
POKE 19471,234:
POKE 19472,234 (*infinite weapons*)

DEFUZION 3
(The New Dimension)

This collect 'em up is marred by ropy collision-detection, so these POKEs are sure to help you on your way.

POKE 18080,173 (*infinite energy*)
POKE 16550,48: POKE 16555,48 (*only two bombs to collect on each level*)
POKE 19456,173 (*infinite time*)

SYS 11108 **restarts the game.**

THE SENTINEL (Firebird)

Especially for Gordo, here is a selection of codes which allow you to see some of the later landscapes in this ground-breaking 3D strategy game—and believe me, they're tougher than eating a piece of beef from Gertrude Hard Horns, the winner of the 2001 World's Toughest Cow competition. They were originally for the BBC version, but also work on the C64. Thanks to Jock Smylie for finding them in the first place.

Level	Code	Level	Code
503	34809584	6024	94747369
1020	18368776	6500	56983792
1520	77699896	7015	66650529
2006	83456976	7514	78983187
2500	47912862	8009	47671152
3005	31958675	8217	20644286
3505	84653475	8404	41484963
4025	87933643	8601	05288502
4513	62131887	8809	74656363
5004	36570406	9064	89848878
5506	58705703	9999	76750745

CREATURES (Thalamus)

This sizeable listing for the disk version of the classic Thalamus platformer is crammed with useful features. It not only gives a choice of infinite lives on either the main in-game and/or the individual torture levels, but also gives infinite shields and invulnerability, and even makes all weapons and information free of charge.

```
0 REM CREATURES HACKPACK BY WAZ
1 FOR WA=50432 TO 50655: READ Z: C=C+Z: POKE
WA,Z: NEXT
2 IF C<>27492 THEN PRINT "ERROR!": END
3 PRINT CHR$(147);
4 PRINT "INFINITE LIVES ON:"
5 INPUT "MAIN GAME (Y/N)";A$: IF A$="N" THEN
POKE 50601,206: POKE 50612,206
6 FOR I=1 TO 3: PRINT "TORTURE SCREEN ";I;:
INPUT A$
7 IF A$="N" THEN POKE 50554+I*9,206
8 NEXT I
9 INPUT "INFINITE SHIELDS (Y/N)";A$: IF A$="N"
THEN POKE 50520,206
11 INPUT "INVULNERABILITY (Y/N)";A$: IF A$="N"
THEN POKE 50525,173
12 PRINT "FREE WEAPONS AND INFO?";
13 INPUT A$: IF A$="N" THEN FOR J=50588 TO
50599: POKEJ,234: NEXT
14 INPUT "HAPPY NOW?";W$: IF W$="N" THEN RUN
15 PRINT CHR$(147); "INSERT CREATURES DISK
AND HIT SPACE!"
16 POKE198,0:WAIT 198,1: SYS50432
20 DATA 169,001,168,162,008,032,186,255
21 DATA 169,001,162,223,160,197,032,189
22 DATA 255,169,000,133,010,032,213,255
23 DATA 169,040,141,043,195,169,197,141
24 DATA 044,195,076,064,194,087,065,090
25 DATA 169,053,141,253,044,169,197,141
26 DATA 254,044,076,190,197,169,076,141
27 DATA 191,020,141,033,129,169,198,141
28 DATA 192,020,169,020,141,193,020,169
29 DATA 064,141,093,118,169,001,141,094
30 DATA 118,141,097,118,141,035,129,169
31 DATA 173,141,151,100,169,096,141,236
32 DATA 060,169,097,141,096,118,169,117
33 DATA 141,034,129,162,000,189,123,197
34 DATA 157,064,001,232,224,067,208,245
35 DATA 076,144,001,173,162,018,201,003
36 DATA 208,005,169,173,141,198,131,201
37 DATA 006,208,005,169,173,141,160,132
38 DATA 201,009,208,005,169,173,141,225
39 DATA 130,076,081,128,162,000,169,000
40 DATA 157,097,234,232,224,027,208,248
41 DATA 169,173,141,160,028,076,000,229
42 DATA 141,081,201,169,173,141,160,028
43 DATA 141,110,231,076,036,201,162,000
44 DATA 189,206,197,157,094,153,232,224
45 DATA 018,208,245,076,237,042,008,001
46 DATA 003,011,005,004,032,002,025,032
47 DATA 023,001,026,032,049,057,057,050
```

SYNETIC (Cyber Systems)

Not your everyday *SEUCK* game, *Synetic* is one you can play all week without getting bored. The difficulty level is ramped up a fair bit, so drive yourself onward with this little engine-booster of a listing which gives infinite lives.

```
0 REM SYNETIC HACKS BY WAZ
1 FOR WA=679 TO 737: READ Z: C=C+Z: POKE WA,Z:
NEXT
2 IF C<>6516 THEN PRINT "ERROR": END
3 PRINT CHR$(147); "INSERT SYNETIC DISK AND
PRESS SPACE"
4 POKE 198,0: WAIT198,1: SYS679
10 DATA 169,001,168,162,008,032,186,255
11 DATA 169,010,162,216,160,002,032,189
12 DATA 255,169,000,032,213,255,162,000
13 DATA 189,205,002,157,027,009,232,224
14 DATA 011,208,245,076,018,008,169,044
15 DATA 141,214,079,141,230,082,076,013
16 DATA 008,083,089,078,069,084,073,067
17 DATA 045,071,042
```

For Action Replay users, the POKEs are as follows:

POKE 19305,44: POKE 20089,44 (*infinite lives*)

RANDOM RESETS

Those of you with a little red box plugged into the back of your C64 should check out the following POKEs...

BLOOD (Arts of Darkness)

POKE 16981,173 (*infinite shots*)
POKE 16818,173 (*infinite bombs*)

SHAOLIN (Jon Wells)

POKE 17796,44 (*invulnerability*)

ADVANCED ACTION MOVIE SIMULATOR (Electric Harem)

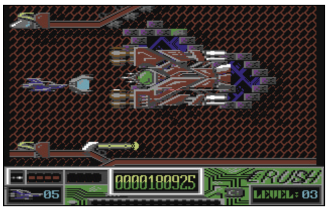
POKE 4982,44: POKE 4990,0 (*infinite energy*)

And there we have it—my first stint at the helm of ZZAP! Tips. We've certainly had some laughs along the way haven't we? (*No—Ed.*) How about the occasional wry smile, then? Well, at least I didn't come around to your house and pull my pants down in your parlour. If we ever do this again, maybe I'll be back with another magnificent menu of tender tips, palatable POKEs, luscious listings and, er, other stuff... So, until then, sit quietly, eat slowly, and be good!

CRUSH

Smash Designs, free, joystick

It's the future. A group of scientists in Mexico are enjoying a round of beer, pizzas and astronomical observation, when suddenly... One of them spots a weird blue meteoroid.



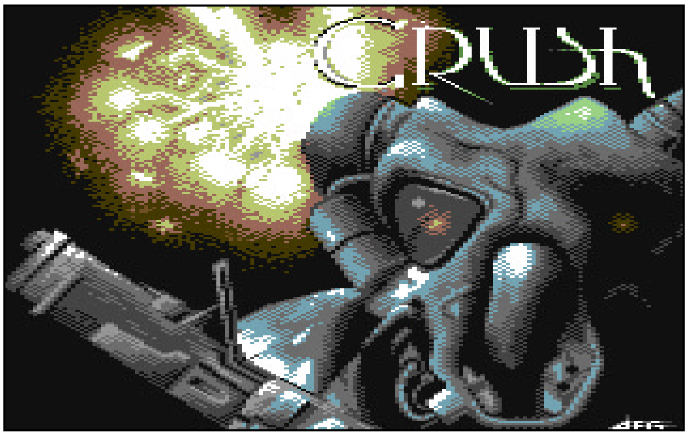
• ***R-Type* of game (sorry...)**

The good news is, he's never seen anything like it. The bad news is, it's on a collision course for Earth. However, after cleaning his long-range telescopic lens and consulting his Pocket Meteor Identification Manual, our cerebral chum changes his mind, and announces that the meteoroid is actually an alien spacecraft. It's an easy mistake to make.

Unfortunately, instead of reporting their find to the military, the brainiac bunch attempt to contact the aliens with everything but semaphore and smoke signals. One week later, San Francisco is a pile of rubble, ashes, and melted Karl Malden rubber masks. Naturally, our noble world governments respond to such an outrage by summoning their best fighter pilots and handing them the most sophisticated plane known to man (or woman). It's time to kick some alien ass.

Guess what your role is? You play one of the brave fighter pilots pitting their wits against eight horizontally-scrolling levels of alien beastliness. Basically, it's *R-Type* all over again, though the action owes more to the Irem classic's imitator, *Katakis*.

As you might expect, grey pods periodically drop from the sky. When shot, they release bonuses. These bonuses aren't cute little sweets designed to tempt the greedy, however—collect them and you get a variety of goodies, including power ups. Sticking with the *R-Type* theme, your first requirement is a forward shield pod which doubles as a firepower enhancement.



• **What's a nice alien like you doing in a place like this?**

There are four different types of satellites/power ups available, each with its own good and bad points. On top of this you get a beam weapon which fires a charge whose power depends on the length of time you depress the fire button. It's handy for blasting a path through pesky alien waves, and generally showing off to all and sundry.

As for the aliens themselves... You'll just have to discover that for yourself. Suffice to say, they vary in size, strength and attack formation. Some are fast and whiz around the screen, others remain immobile, and inevitably every level climaxes with a huge mother-alien. Knock out eight of them, and the world's gratitude is your reward.



This takes me back to the shoot 'em up heyday of the 1980s. The action is highly derivative, being little more than a reworking of Irem's legendary R-Type**—but when a game is as well written and playable as this, a lack of originality is forgivable. I have a couple of reservations, though. Firstly, the Beam Weapon (another** R-Type **staple) is far too weedy. Instead of unleashing plasma death as you might expect, your fighter spits out a small white blob. Secondly, the gameplay is a tad unforgiving. The smallest mistake results in instant death—and with claustrophobic levels like these, mistakes are inevitable. Don't let these criticisms put you off, however. This is an enjoyable game, and I highly recommend it.**



The C64 has had its fair share of horizontally scrolling shoot 'em ups. Armalyte **and** Salamander **are among my favourites, so I was excited when** Crush **came up for review. In many ways it's similar to** Katakis**, even down to the title track—but that's no bad thing. It's fun to play, there are some nice backgrounds, and the enemies are imaginative. The main problem is the game's toughness, especially when you lose a life on one of the later levels. All your power-ups are lost with it, and that makes survival a really tough challenge. However, if you're a die-hard shoot 'em up fan like me, you'll enjoy blasting these aliens into outer orbit for a long time to come.**



• **Annihilate! Exterminate! Then relax with a cup of tea**



The graphics are impressive, the music is good, the sound effects are crisp, and the explosions for the end of level bosses are really exceptional. So what's wrong with Crush**? The alien ships. They either launch kamikaze runs at your fighter, or float around in a pointless and vaguely irritating way. They don't even fire back. On the positive side, there are loads of them—but to be honest, I would rather have fewer enemies and better AI. Overall, this is well polished, nicely presented, and worth playing for the end of level bosses alone... But it lacks substance.**

PRESENTATION 70%
Nice title screen and opening/endgame sequences, but not much else.

GRAPHICS 79%
Parallax-scrolling backgrounds and hordes of fast, smoothly-animated sprites. Slight flicker and a wimpy Beam Weapon, though.

SOUND 83%
Good title music, reasonable FX, and funky in-game tunes.

HOOKABILITY 82%
It's an *R-Type* clone: instantly addictive, and great fun.

LASTABILITY 88%
Eight tough levels mean it will take some time to crack.

OVERALL 80%
A first-rate shoot 'em up. Far from original, but still provides plenty of entertainment.



• Grab those coins before the zombies bite your bum...

SAMBER

Lepsi Developments/Eagleware, free, joystick

Based on the legendary *Lode Runner*, *Samber's* eponymous hero is a magical devil who has escaped from an evil dictator. To secure his freedom he must battle through 40 levels packed with platforms and ladders.

Zombie guards patrol the single-screen levels, and if one catches our hero, he loses a life. Fortunately, Samber can dig holes with a quick click of the fire button. If a guard falls through a hole he tumbles to the platform below, and if he is trapped on the bottom platform, he dies.

Samber can fall through holes too, so you have to think carefully about where you dig.

The goal in each level is to collect golden power coins. These become more inaccessible as you progress, adding a welcome puzzle element to the action. After every tenth level, Samber acquires one of the four magical keys which will guarantee his escape.

There's a time limit, too—so don't hang about. Guide the poor devil to freedom before the zombies get him!



Lode Runner is a favourite of mine—it's simple, playable and addictive. Eagleware tried to resurrect it with Samber, but much of what made the original special is gone. Enemy intelligence is non-existent—it's possible to be standing in a zombie's path, only to watch him switch direction and run away. Also, when you dig a hole the guard drops through to the floor below, but you can't pass until the hole has filled itself in. I found the graphics charmless, cluttered and untidy, too... Avoid.



The graphics are great, and the start and end screens are stunning. However, Samber's gameplay is often lacking. The elements of a good platform romp are present, but they somehow feel stale and a little dated. This is a shame, because I really appreciated many of the level designs: some of them are devilishly hard to complete within the tight time limits. In short, this is one for Lode Runner maniacs only—personally, I was left wanting that little bit more.

PRESENTATION 46%
Atrocious title screen, but there's a highscore table and it's quick to load.

GRAPHICS 78%
Eccentric design, but good use of colour.

SOUND 66%
Reasonable tunes throughout.

HOOKABILITY 30%
Too frustrating to grab you by the throat.

LASTABILITY 49%
Loads to do if you persist—but you really have to persist.

OVERALL 45%
A simple concept that's poorly realised.

BLOOD

Arts of Darkness, free, joystick

There's been a mass jailbreak, and thousands of criminals are on the run. Your orders are to terminate them with extreme prejudice!

An endless stream of fugitives enters from the left, and you have to mow them down as quickly as possible. Aim with your gunsight, then shoot (fire button), or throw smart bombs (Commodore key)... And, er, that's it.

Shoot your victims in the head and they die instantly. However, to add 'excitement' to your mission, you can also shoot them in the arms (they continue to run, bleeding from their wounds) or in the legs (they continue crawling), both of which mean you have to hit them again. If ten escape, you lose your job and the game's over—so carry on killing, copper!

• This is no time to lose your head





This rollicking blast-fest drew a small crowd around my monitor and had us laughing with morbid glee—for about fifteen seconds. Interest wanes dramatically once you realise that all you get is a single screen of sub-par action, consisting of pixelated decapitation and dismemberment. As for strategy, just keep the fire button depressed as you frantically mow down the chunky prisoner sprites. Here's hoping we see a lot more variety in the next Arts of Darkness release.



The atmospheric intro promises much, but once you start spraying bullets you discover a frustrating, repetitive game. The lack of a difficulty curve means you soon lose interest. The fact that there's no goal is worse—breaking 'records' is pointless, since your score is displayed for only a split second. It might prove an enjoyable (if short-lived) blast for mindless joystick jugglers, but it's too limited for anyone looking for something more substantial. Even the graphics can't compensate for the extremely poor action. In short, incredibly boring.

PRESENTATION 41%
No multiload, but no options either, and an annoying delay when you die. Nice intro screen, though.

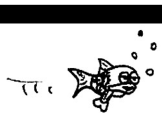
GRAPHICS 25%
Blocky sprites comically run across a single background that could only be described as 'minimalist'.

SOUND 51%
Basic shooting effects, and a short, atmospheric tune.

HOOKABILITY 45%
You think: 'Hang on, there's got to be more than this...'

LASTABILITY 16%
... but the repetitive gameplay and poor graphics soon grate.

OVERALL 23%
Please kill me.

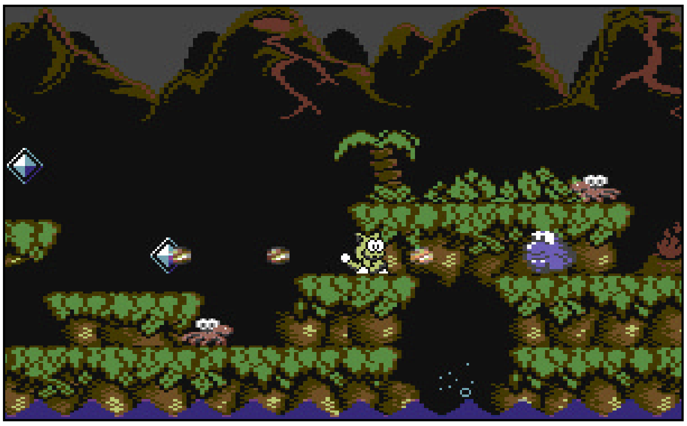


ZZAP! TEST

IT'S MAGIC

Stardust, free, joystick

Tom is a cat with a problem. His home is the magical Dream Islands—a colourful, picturesque, and blissfully peaceful place, until a gang of monsters arrived on its shores.



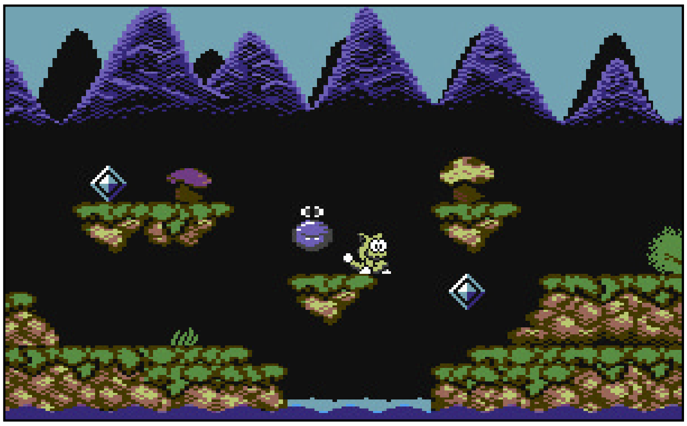
• **Clyde, erm, *Tom* gets spat at by a blue blob**

Our feline friend is apprentice to the Master Magician, ruler of the Dream Islands. The Master has been called away on business, leaving his trusted trainee in charge—and it isn't long before the cat finds himself in deep water. He wakes one morning to find that his once-idyllic world has been overrun by a variety of fearsome fiends.

Not only have these creatures overrun the isles, they've also stolen the master's many magical potions, robbing him of much of his power. If Tom can't reclaim the potions and rid the world of these creatures before his master returns, the Dream Islands could be lost forever.

So the quest begins. What follows is classic 'run 'n' jump' action, set across colourful, sideways-scrolling, platform-based backdrops.

Tom must complete two objectives on each level. The first is to collect all the magical stars scattered around the platforms, which are well guarded by one or more enemies.



• **Tom contemplates the beauty of nature**

The second task concerns the stolen magical potions. You need to retrieve one from every level—but you can't tell whether a monster is carrying a potion until after you've killed it. Sometimes you get lucky, and find the magician's brew on one of the first fiends you kill... And sometimes you don't, and you end up having to exterminate every enemy to reveal the potion.

Tom isn't unarmed in his quest. The Master Magician managed to teach him a spell or two, so the fighting fur-ball can fire magical pellets at the invading hordes. Be warned, though—some need several hits before they keel over.

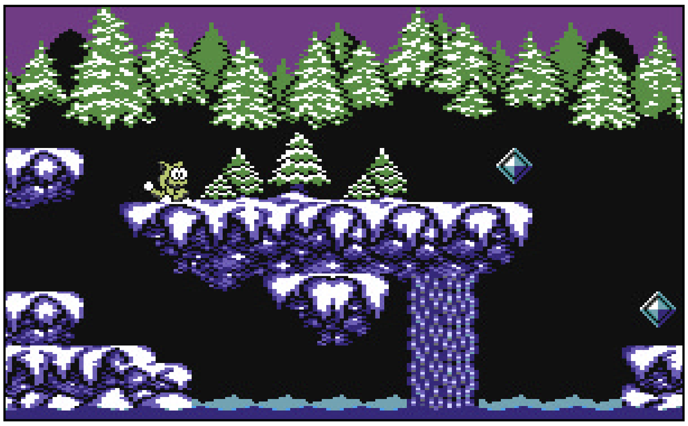
Once Tom has collected all the stars and retrieved the potions, his quest is complete. Peace can reign once more in the Dream Islands, and our furry chum can have a quiet cat nap before solving the world's problems all over again.



This is enjoyable, for a while. The Creatures**-style backdrops and** Giana Sisters **gameplay kick things off nicely, as Tom learns to battle his way through three worlds of mutant beings. The action nosedives after a few levels though, because nothing much changes between them. It's not as though the task is hugely challenging, either—the end-of-level monsters are weedy, particularly if you manage to get behind them. Despite these faults,** It's Magic **is a reasonable platformer, but best kept for those days when thinking is the last thing you want to do.**



The first thing that strikes you about It's Magic **is the impressive graphics, although they do bear more than a passing resemblance to Thalamus's** Creatures**. The simple premise of the game also promises quick and addictive fun... But unfortunately, it's a promise that isn't kept. I have no gripe with simple run 'n' jump games, but they only really work if they're fast-paced, or have some depth. Neither of these descriptions applies here. The game moves along sedately, there is no variety in the shoot/jump/collect-the-goodies action, and it isn't long before boredom sets in. Despite these limitations, it's obvious that Stardust is a talented bunch of programmers and has the potential to produce something more enjoyable in future. As for** It's Magic**—it isn't bad, just painfully mediocre.**



• **Tom wishes he'd worn his thermal undies**



My initial impressions were that stealing graphics from other games is wrong, no matter how you try and candy-coat it. Thankfully the gameplay is solid enough to overlook these suspected aesthetic infringements—at least in the short term. The 'run, jump and collect' action isn't original, but it's simple enough to get you playing for a few hours. After that repetition sets in, and small problems (such as the floaty main character, and unforgiving collision detection) become insurmountable. Pretty, but vacant.

PRESENTATION 64%
No additional options, but an eye-catching title screen.

GRAPHICS 90%
Nicely-drawn, smoothly-animated sprites, flawless scrolling, and neat animations.

SOUND 72%
A catchy title tune, and fairly decent in-game effects.

HOOKABILITY 91%
Immediately playable, and incredibly easy to get into...

LASTABILITY 55%
...but the limited action soon begins to bore.

OVERALL 62%
A technically superb platformer, marred by repetitive gameplay.



AND THE BEAT GOES ON...

Galway, Hubbard, Follin. These men took the C64's SID chip and used it to change the sound of video games. Chris Abbott reveals how dedicated fans have kept those melodies alive, with a vibrant cover-version scene and C64 music events.

Until the Commodore 64 and its immensely versatile SID chip arrived, sound and music had always been the neglected area within the field of video game development. Around 1986, gifted coders started to show what could really be done with this hardware, and C64 game music became a talking point for reviewers and players, as well as a major selling-point for the games themselves. As SID heroes like Martin Galway and Rob Hubbard started to gain recognition in the press, software houses commissioned them to produce soundtracks that would give new titles extra polish.

In the UK, there was soon demand for real audio recordings. The June 1987 issue of Zzap!64 bore a cover tape containing an atmospheric studio remix of Rob Hubbard's *Sanxion* soundtrack. (Bizarrely, some readers wrote in to complain that said *audio* remix wouldn't load into their C64s!) Shortly afterward came *Datahits*—a cassette of music from *Crazy Comets*, *Hypersports* and others, actually recorded from a C64, with synth tracks and digidrums laid over the top. The resulting cover versions weren't the greatest, but as the first commercial release of C64 tunes, it was exciting for the new breed of SID music fans.

By the early '90s, hobbyist musician-programmers across Europe were creating their own remixes. The advent of trackers on the Atari ST and Amiga led to a host of covers—most were little more than sample-heavy rehashes of the originals, but they did the job of keeping the tunes alive. However, there were a few classic remixes, the most famous being Jogeir Liljedahl's *Galway is God* which successfully melded the *Rambo* and *Green Beret* loaders.

By 1994, cheap but sophisticated PC hardware was advancing the scene further.

Michael Schwendt released *SIDPlay*, a PC-based SID emulator that played music data extracted directly from C64 games. MIDI remixes of C64 tunes began to appear too, and the advent of the Web allowed musicians to swap their work on sites such as C64audio.com and Bluenine. In 1995, Schwendt followed up *SIDPlay* with *SID2MIDI*, a program that created MIDI files from SIDs. It changed the face of C64 remixing at a stroke, by capturing all the nuances of the original music.

At this point audio distribution of these tracks was somewhat impractical, because formats such as MP3 weren't available. However, by 1996 there was sufficient interest in **C64Audio.com** to justify an audio CD of enhanced MIDI files—and in 1998, *Back in Time 1* was finally released. This contained Rob Hubbard's first C64 remix work for over a decade, and included covers of *Crazy Comets*, *Delta*, and *Monty on the Run*. As such, it was marketed as the first "official" remix CD.

BIT1 set the scene for quality remixes from pioneers such as Dead Guys, distributed in MP3 format via websites such as Triad. In November 1999 came *Back in Time 2*, featuring the first C64 orchestral works (*Forbidden Forest* and *Aztec Challenge*), as well as nods to the past with an updated *Galway is God* and *Thalamusik*. Six months later, Triad's site gave way to **remix.kwed.org**, currently the biggest C64 cover site, with hundreds of remixes to download.

Suddenly the scene exploded, *Zombie Nation* happened, and the German techno crowd began to assimilate SID. Reyn Ouwehand, record producer and ex-Maniac of Noise, released his CD called *Nexus 6581*, which took instrumental performance of C64 music to new heights.

The scene continues to thrive. In May 2001, *Back in Time 3* and the *Back in Time Live* club nights arrived. The latter included a collection of exclusive dance remixes, along with gathering many of the original composers together for the first time in years. The former was the first C64 remix album to be more than just an anthology—it was a sci-fi concept album. John Williams does C64? Just listen to *Zoids* and *Flash Gordon*. Those Hubbard beats sound as good today as they did all those years ago…



• **Get the best C64 MP3 remixes here, guv**



• **The third *Back in Time* CD, from C64audio.com**

THE TOP, ER, SIX...

Our muso, Craig Grannell, checks out dozens of remixes and picks out his top tunes...

Delta (*Chris Abbott*)
If your jaw hit the ground when you heard the original Hubbard masterpiece, listen to this. *Back in Time 3's* stand-out track is quite simply a classic.

Hell on Earth Spells Game Over (*Makke*)
Intriguingly adding vocals, Makke produces a seamless mix of several classic C64 tunes. Human League, eat your heart out!

Green Beret Loader (*Thomas Detert*)
Taking a cue from Vangelis, this atmospheric track from *Remix64* might have been lifted straight from *Blade Runner.*

Flip the flop (*Reyn Ouwehand*)
Reyn's dance-oriented cover of his original piece, which was used in Blackmail's semi-legendary *Dutch Breeze* demo.

Arkanoid (*Slow Poison*)
One of the more innovative versions out there, this ditches the 'dirt' of Galway's original in favour of up-tempo burbly electronic oddness.

Way of the Exploding Fist [3] (*Kent 'Trace' Wallden*)
People who thought Trace's original *Fist* remix couldn't be beaten were wrong. This trance mix blows the competition away.

w: **www.C64audio.com**
w: **remix.kwed.org**
w: **remix64.phatsites.de**
w: **come.to/prevue**

THE ZONE RANGER

Ten years after founding Binary Zone PD, Jason 'Kenz' Mackenzie shares his memories of the C64 scene, and reveals his Top 10 demos of all time. We're truly blessed... (*Cut the fawning—Ed.*)

We sent our roving reporter Paul Sumner to interview Kenz about life, the universe and everything. Well, Commodore 64s, Binary Zone, Bouff and music, at least...

What first got me interested in the Commodore 64? An instant love of its music. I used to proudly own a Speccy—I thought *Jet Set Willy* and *Knight Lore* were the best things since *Star Wars* and Lego. But when I saw *Uridium* at a friend's house, it blew my mind. Silky-smooth scrolling, fantastic arcade-style graphics, and proper music!

My friend kept me supplied with cassettes of the latest game tunes, and they influenced my tastes for years to come. I was a huge fan of electronic music, and loved the sound produced by Jean-Michel Jarre and Kraftwerk, because they reminded me of the C64's output.

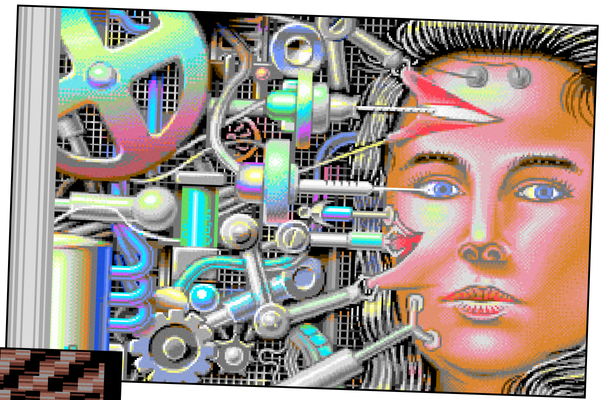
Before long I was the proud possessor of my very own beige breadbin, and can remember how excited I was when I bought my first ever copy of Zzap!64. It was Issue 13 (the one with the zombies on the front). I love that issue—it made me rush out and buy *Thrust* for starters.

I immersed myself in games for a while before discovering demos. An advert in Commodore User brought the scene to my attention. Compunet duo Ian and Mic had set up a PD library called 'Wicked PD', and had put together a catalogue containing disks filled with demos.

I really enjoyed Ian and Mic's releases, and even helped them out by typesetting some of their catalogues on the Mac. They eventually decided to move onto other things—but by this time I had various contacts with whom I traded disks, and was starting to build up a nice collection of demos. That's where I had the idea to start up a PD library of my own. It actually took another entire year before I had enough software to make a decent catalogue, but in 1990 Binary Zone PD was born. I placed an advert in Zzap!64 and was immediately deluged with orders!

The first couple of years running the Zone were absolute madness. The demo scene was in full swing, and I received a constant stream of superb releases—some were even submitted by the crews themselves for inclusion in the Binary Zone catalogue. I loved it when a new release from one of the 'big'

Continued on following page ▸



DEUS EX MACHINA (Crest)

The baby of the bunch. Released in 2000, this classy production proved there was still life in the old breadbin yet. It's also the last disk I added to the Binary Zone catalogue, which makes it a bit special for me.



RED STORM (Triad)

A superb release from Triad, featuring excellent hi-res graphics and animations, along with thought-provoking messages, and surprisingly good use of Beatles tunes.



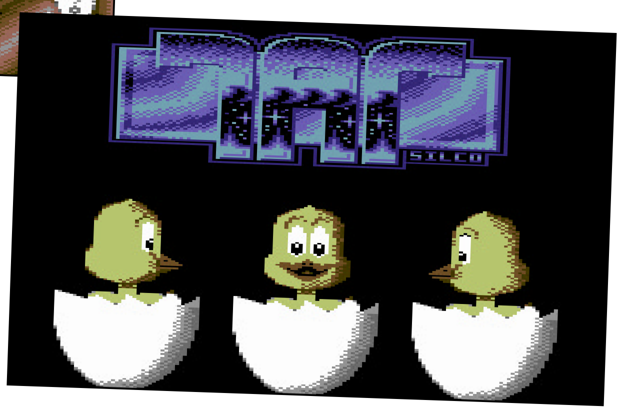
TOWER POWER (Camelot)

So good, they released it twice! A fab one-disk-side preview was replaced with a two-disk-side megademo, complete with an extremely nice hidden section. Lovely.



GRAPHIXMANIA 2 (MDA)

Nice graphics, superb use of samples, funny animations. Great stuff.



DUCKS (TAT)

This is even better than the original Amiga *Budbrain* demo that inspired it. Great sampled music and excellent lip-synching from the cute cartoon ducks.



SEAL OF FOCALOR (MSI)

A totally amazing production from Megastyle, featuring powerful imagery and some of the best sample mixes from Cycleburner. It's more than a mere demo, it's a work of art!



REANIM8ED (Hitmen)

A polished production featuring hyper-smooth, full-screen, looped animations. The spider will make your skin crawl...



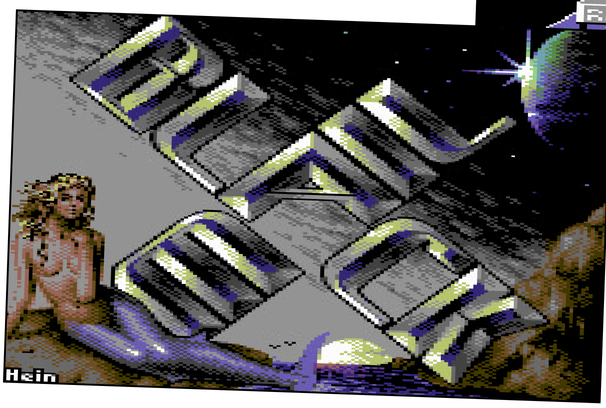
MATHEMATICA (Reflex)

Fast and smooth routines which include stunning 3D tunnels and pounding music from PVCF. Pure class!



THRUST CONCERT (Stoat & Tim)

From Compunet's golden era comes this classic 'live' performance of Hubbard's amazing *Thrust* theme. I love the way their expressions change when they reach a 'good bit' in the tune.



DUTCH BREEZE (Blackmail)

Arguably one of the finest C64 demos ever released. Gorgeous graphics and sonics throughout, excellent design, and a it's bit rude too... Epic!

BINARY ZONE Interactive!

All of the demos featured on these pages are available from Binary Zone PD. Check out the website at www.bzpd.freeserve.co.uk**. Catalogue numbers for the disks are as follows:**

***Deus Ex Machina* (Crest)—BZD500, *Red Storm* (Triad)—BZD225, *Tower Power* (Camelot)—BZD317, *Graphixmania 2* (MDA)—BZD188, *Ducks* (TAT)—BZD213, *Seal of Focalor* (MSI)—BZD267, *Reanim8ed* (Hitmen)—BZD433, *Mathematica* (Reflex)—BZD351, *Thrust Concert* (Stoat & Tim)—BZD010, *Dutch Breeze* (Blackmail)—BZD200.**

crews arrived, and was amazed at what groups like Crest, Blackmail, Cosmos, Triad, and Bonzai were capable of squeezing out of the C64. I even contributed to the scene myself with assorted releases by our little 'Computer World' team, and later joined the UK demo crew, Xentrix.

In 1992, I was asked by Zzap!64 if I'd like to do an interview. This didn't seem like a big deal at the time—I was in regular contact with them about advertising and PD software issues—but I felt the interview itself was a wasted opportunity. It rambled on about what would happen if other people copied the disks and set up their own library, and it was interspersed by unfunny comments from the then managing editor, Lucy Hickman... But it was still a proud moment for little old me.

With the PD library in full swing, I initiated some other C64 projects in the years that followed. These included taking over The Guild Adventure Software, and setting up Psytronik to release budget games (I loved working with Jon Wells, Alf Yngve and Jason Kelk). Then, in 1995, I released the first issue of Commodore Zone—designed as a replacement of sorts for Zzap!64 and Commodore Format.

Towards the end of the '90s I moved the Zone online, and added a range of C64 audio music CDs and C64-related CD-ROMs to the Binary Zone catalogue, all of which are still available from the website.

And now, in 2002, I've sort of come full circle. Once again, I'm heavily involved in the C64 music scene, having joined forces with Chris Abbott and his **C64audio.com** empire. I've also discovered there's more to life than the old breadbin, thanks to my involvement with TV presenter, Emily Booth. I get to sell her underwear on the internet (via the **www.bouff.tv** online store), and listen to C64 remixes all day. Maybe life isn't so bad after all...



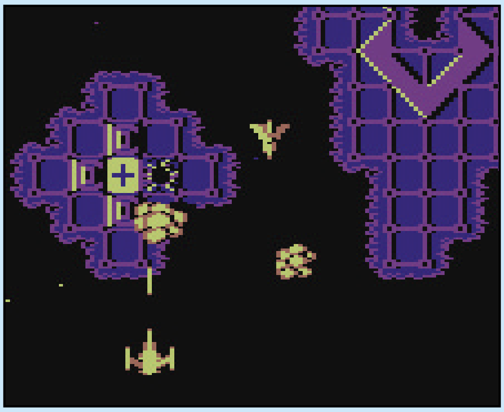
- **Kenz 'n' Bouff**

ZZAP! BACK

Issue 24 saw twenty-six games reviewed, and apart from the quartet discussed here there were impressive releases such as *Krakout*, *Arkanoid*, *Leaderboard Executive Edition*, and the cult Minter classic, *Void Runner*. The issue also welcomed two new staff members to the Towers: strategy queen Phillipa Irving, and industrial chemist-turned-reviewer, Steve Jarratt. Two former Zzap! staffers from a later era—Paul "PG Tips" Glancey, and Robin "Pig in a Poke" Hogg—revisit those games of yore...

FIRETRACK

Electric Dreams



PRESENTATION 93%
Unusual instructions, a superb set of options, and a neat, user-friendly game structure.
GRAPHICS 94%
Individual, but extremely pretty and very effective.
SOUND 72%
An odd soundtrack plays throughout, but there is a useful sound effects only option if it gets on your nerves.
HOOKABILITY 92%
Instantly rewarding and frenetic shoot 'em up action.
LASTABILITY 87%
Even the greatest of space pilots will find the eight worlds tough nuts to crack.
VALUE 85%
Enough action to warrant its price tag.
OVERALL 88%
Fast, frenetic and extremely playable—easily the best vertically scrolling shoot 'em up to date.

This vertically-scrolling blaster almost Sizzled—which might be something of a mystery now, but definitely wasn't back then. Back in 1987 this sort of game was pretty rare and *Firetrack* was greeted with open arms by the Zzap!64 lads.

Shoot 'em up king Jaz pointed to its 'frenzied' alien formations and 'unusual' graphics. Steve agreed, though he did think the sound was 'a bit poor'. Gary summed it up best however, calling it 'attractive, immaculately presented, extremely playable and addictive'.

This came out when vertically-scrolling shoot 'em ups were still somewhat thin on the ground, but a whole load of similar, slicker games appeared pretty soon after. Firebird's £1.99 Warhawk *was a smarter* Star Force *clone, and Ocean did a great job converting Konami's* Slap Fight. *Next to games of that calibre, this looks pretty rough.*
PG

This kind of reminds me of a SEUCK *game, and I really can't figure out how it did so well back then. Despite the limited graphics and an obvious lack of opponent variety it's still strangely compelling with a very high 'just one more go' factor—but I still can't get too excited by it, even for that time.*
RH

(Paul) It almost certainly wouldn't have got that 94% for Graphics or the 92% for Hookability if it had come along a few months later. This really doesn't compare that well with many titles that followed during the rest of 1987 and 1988.

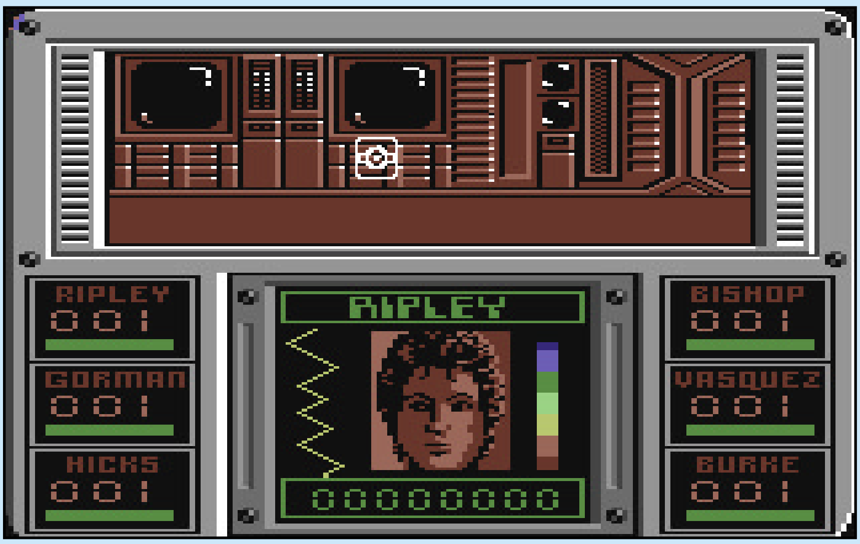
(Robin) Graphics aren't so good, Hookability is probably about right, but everything else should drop by 20% at least. Not bad—but not that good, either!

ALIENS

Electric Dreams

In the days when movie tie-ins were more blockhead than blockbuster, this was something of a pleasant surprise. Even so, it didn't please all the reviewers all of the time. Sci-fi aficionado and *Aliens* fan Steve was by far the coolest of the three, claiming succinctly that it 'could have been better'. As usual, Gaz also found things to irritate him and moan about, but grumpily conceded that it was 'atmospheric and engrossing'. Jaz suggested several areas for improvement too, but turned out to be the most positive member of the team, when he declared it 'the best film tie-in to date—and a good game to boot'.

A multi-character first-person shooter—pretty advanced for its day! But watching your cohorts' life signs failing while you were struggling with another character was about the only tension in the game. The shooting action wasn't great even back then, and watching the aliens strolling around was hardly reminiscent of the movies. I remember this was supposed to be better than the American Aliens *game, but it doesn't look that exciting now.*
PG



PRESENTATION 66%
Useful map supplied, but no demo mode or options, and the restart key is awkwardly positioned.
GRAPHICS 81%
Effective room interiors and Aliens, and some neat visual effects.
SOUND 27%
Very limited: no music and few spot effects.
HOOKABILITY 81%
Easy to get into, and the action makes repeated play compulsive.
LASTABILITY 76%
Enormous complex to explore and a strong urge to 'get even further this time'.
VALUE 76%
Slightly overpriced, but fans of the film should be satisfied.
OVERALL 81%
The best film tie-in to date, and a good game to boot.

This is a good movie tie-in, but not quite as scary as it once was. I recall the Spectrum version of the game had aliens that were more fluid, which helped immensely—the aliens in the C64 version shuffle around with little menace (except for those in the dark). There is a strong desire to progress to the Queen, and I enjoyed mapping it at the time; but even with a decent map it's all too easy to lose your bearings, and once that happens frustration gets you. The limited sound—just a few weak effects—is a shame too, because with this kind of game it could have been used to excellent effect. Overall, Aliens *was a good attempt, but far from perfect.*
RH

(Paul) It certainly deserved recognition for the innovations in its day, but I'd bring the Graphics, Hookability, Lastability and Overall marks down a bit to around the mid-70s.

(Robin) I agree with Paul. Some sort of first person game was probably the only way the *Aliens* film could be recreated, but a low-70s game it is.



DISK

PRESENTATION 79%
The fabulous instruction manual (which provides enlightening and very interesting reading) and the excellent keyboard overlay compensate for the slow, but not overly irritating delays during 'set-up'.
GRAPHICS 91%
Convincing 3D graphics, and the cockpit display area works extremely well.
SOUND 64%
Functional sound effects which could have been better.
HOOKABILITY 94%
The useful options and training missions painlessly ease a potential pilot into action.
LASTABILITY 97%
The five scenarios provide a wealth of missions and enjoyment which should keep a pilot happy for months.
VALUE 86%
Very expensive, but you get what you pay for.
OVERALL 94%
A superlative flight/combat simulation.

CASSETTE

PRESENTATION 79%
The addition of a neat title sequence doesn't compensate for the slow, long-winded multi-load.
GRAPHICS 91%
Convincing 3D graphics, and the cockpit display area works extremely well.
SOUND 64%
Functional sound effects which could have been better.
HOOKABILITY 78%
Any initial enthusiasm is quelled by the lengthy and awkward multi-load.
LASTABILITY 71%
The five scenarios provide a wealth of missions and enjoyment which should keep a pilot happy for months—if the multi-load doesn't prove too frustrating.
VALUE 58%
Grossly overpriced.
OVERALL 72%
A superlative flight/combat simulation ruined by a painful multi-load system.

GUNSHIP

Microprose

Microprose's long-awaited helicopter sim justified its cover game status with a Sizzler. New boy Steve cut his reviewer's teeth, proclaiming it 'a tremendous simulator', and 'state of the art'. Jaz thought it was 'incredible', too—but Gary Penn lived up to his grumpy reputation, calling it 'slow, tedious, unrewarding, and not at all atmospheric', and accusing the cassette version of being 'a complete waste of time and effort'. Ho hum...

I don't think Microprose ever made a bad military simulator. Gunship *only had wire-frame graphics and everything moved at a few frames a second, but it was sufficiently captivating for your mind to fill in the blanks. The detail packed into the game was outstanding, and the presentation—from the amazing manuals to the slick mission briefings—was of the highest standard.*
PG

The wealth of detail in Gunship *inevitably made it a game suited to disk owners—but like* Project Stealth Fighter, *it dripped atmosphere. The best bit was the bucket loads of tension that came from limping home after a medal-winning mission with everyone on your tail. Good stuff—but* Project Stealth Fighter *was the C64's finest flight sim hour.*
RH

(Paul) The high marks for the disk and lower mark for the cassette version still stand. It's a shame it was developed with the disk-friendly US market in mind.

(Robin) Not much to change, although Graphics should come down to the low-80s, and maybe Hookability too, as flight sims are never the easiest to get to grips with. Lastability was Microprose's strength though, and that was spot on.

DELTA

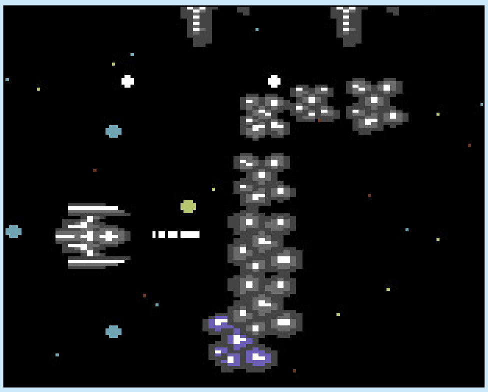
Thalamus

One of the more controversial reviews in Zzap!'s history saw this classic horizontally-scrolling blaster awarded a measly 74%. Gary played fly in the ointment again, condemning its pattern-learning as 'frustrating and quite boring', and claiming he preferred the mixing desk loader to the game itself! Steve's feelings were mixed, describing the action as 'predictable', but acknowledging the 'superb' music. Jaz could barely control himself however, using words such as 'impressive', 'superlative', 'stunning' and 'amazing'. Steady, JR...

I bought this before the review came out and played it for months. It wasn't a substitute for Konami's Nemesis*—the power-ups were a bit rubbish—but what a sensational C64 AV demo. The graphics are beautiful—I still prefer them to* Armalyte*'s—and Rob's hypnotic tunes are amazing. Jaz once told me that Thalamus commissioned Rob to write something that sounded like Philip Glass'* Koyaanisqatsi *soundtrack, and that's exactly what he did. Turn off the lights, turn up the sound and… Wow…*
PG



PRESENTATION 97%
Innovative loading system and slick in-game presentation.
GRAPHICS 92%
Very effective parallax starfield, pretty sprites and landscapes, and varied alien movement patterns.
SOUND 97%
Excellent Rob Hubbard soundtrack and some good spot effects.
HOOKABILITY 79%
Easy to get into, but predictable after only a few plays.
LASTABILITY 63%
32 levels and roughly 200 attack patterns, but very little real variety.
VALUE 72%
There are cheaper shoot 'em ups, but few as polished.
OVERALL 74%
A high quality production which lacks substance.



I'm a sucker for all things with a Nemesis *flavour and* Armalyte *is my favourite C64 game of all time, so I have a soft spot for Stavros' homage to Konami shoot 'em ups. I don't regard the predictability of alien waves as being a problem—*Salamander *was the same, and success was rewarded by awesome graphics and gameplay twists along the way. It looked, sang and played beautifully, just like the best arcade shoot 'em ups—and you can't ask more than that.*
RH

(Paul) The ratings for Presentation, Graphics, and Sound were definitely right. I'd up the Hookability, Lastability and Overall quite a bit, too. I think this deserved borderline Sizzler status at least.

(Robin) Up the Hookability to a tad short of 90% and Lastability up by 25%: that should do it. Sure, you could complete it eventually—but at least you knew you could complete it again! Underrated to the max—this should have Sizzled.

A LESSON IN SURFING ON THE COMMODORE SUPERHIGHWAY

There are literally dozens of websites out there dedicated to our favourite beige box, so which ones deserve your attention? Our online guru Mat 'Mayhem' Allen takes a look at the best and reveals all. Well, not quite *all*, but you get the general idea...

It's great to see so much online activity dedicated to the C64, despite the last mainstream releases being published in 1993. Back then, most people hadn't heard of the Internet, didn't know what a website was, and had never received email. How things have changed: the Web is now one of the best forms of communication for retro computing news. The thing is, there are so many sites out there, it's tricky to know where C64 fans should go first. We're here to help!

Rather than save the best until last, we thought we'd tell you about it first. Lemon (**www.lemon64.com**) is a cracking website for the newbie and oldster alike. Revamped at the very end of 2001, the site has around 3,000 game downloads, a chat room, a museum, a thriving message board, and a growing archive of C64 links.

The Gamebase64 website (**www.gamebase64.com**) is determined to mount a challenge, though. This archiving project aims to collate every single game released for the C64 and make them all available for download. It should be online by the time of going to press... Hopefully.

In the meantime, Martin Pugh's extensive C64 archive (**arnold.c64.org/index/c64index.htm**) enables you to search the entire Arnold FTP site via the Web, and Mayhem in Monsterland (**www.geocities.com/MayhemNaboo/**) has a thorough selection of C64 cartridge scans and downloads.

Once you've got the games, you'll need to know how to play them. The Project 64 site (**project64.c64.org**) has a huge collection of electronic documentation for hundreds of C64 titles. The more enterprising amongst you might also like to visit Starcom (**sta.c64.org**) which has the software, hardware and schematics to show you how to transfer disc images between C64 floppies and your PC.

From games that were to games that weren't. Frank Gasking's Cyber 64 website (**www.fgasking.freeserve.co.uk**) collects C64 treats that never quite made it. Some even had full Zzap!64 reviews, but never reached the shelves... You can grab playable demos and games from the huge selection on offer.

C64 music lovers have never had it so good, either. You no longer have to load games, reset them and type in a tedious listing to hear all your favourite tunes. Instead, nip over to the High Voltage SID Collection website (**www.hvsc.c64.org**) which archives well over 10,000 SID tunes, and provides links to players for a number of platforms.

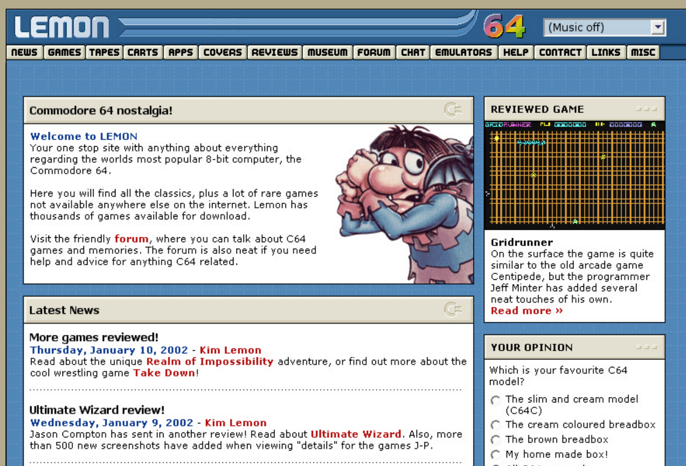
If you fancy more up-to-date sounds, then check out C64 Audio (**www.C64audio.com**) and **remix.kwed.org**. The latter site houses hundreds of MP3 remixes by fans and ex-C64 composers, whereas C64 Audio has taken things into the professional arena and sells CDs that include input from Rob Hubbard and Martin Galway, amongst others.

Finally, while many C64 magazines are gone, few are forgotten. *Commodore Format* may have sucked, but **www.commodoreformat.co.uk** certainly doesn't—it contains a growing archive of issue scans and other goodies. Infinitely better source material can be found at The Def Guide to Zzap!64 (**www.zzap64.co.uk**). As well as complete scans of every issue, the site features the Zzap! Bible, articles, interviews, and message boards. A magnificent piece of work. (What do you mean we're biased?)

Okay, okay, we understand... You're insatiable, and there just aren't enough sites here for you. But don't worry, help is at hand. If you want to wade neck-deep in URLs, try these huge links archives: COCOS (**www.c64.cc/**), and The Great Commodore 64 Link page (**www.fortunecity.com/skyscraper/tyrell/167/main.html**). They should satisfy even the most ardent retro nut.



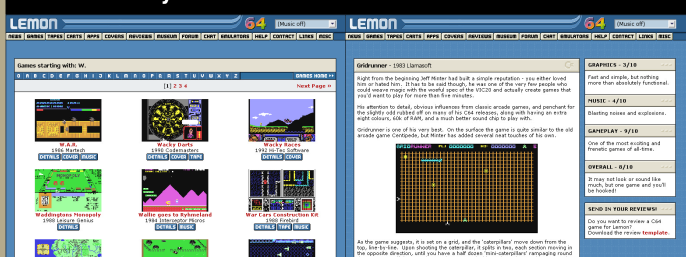
• **Gamebase64... Great idea, guys—but is it finished yet?**



• **The graveyard of unreleased games**



• **The Lemon 64 site is the best all-rounder on the web, and with barely a whiff of citrus**



ZZAP! ADVENTURE



At last, I have arisen! For years I have existed on the 'other' plane, unable to guide my students or advise my minions on how to resurrect my ashes. I find myself faced with a formidable task: the world has changed, our beloved C64 has been eclipsed by other devices, and the adventurer's role has altered beyond recognition. I have much to learn—but I have much to teach too, for students are ignorant of the old ways. Inquiries about the latest text adventures are met with blank faces, and seminars on map-making have a shockingly low attendance. Join me as I summon past masters and examine the roots from which current trees have grown...

My first contact is with Scott Adams, author of many early Adventure International titles and the popular *Questprobe* series.

Scott: W... where am I?
WW: Don't worry Scott, there are exits North and East. Go North.
Scott: ...O.K.

After some explanation he was very understanding. I began by asking him about the current state of adventure gaming and whether it had fulfilled or frustrated his early aspirations.

Scott: I really had no idea that it would become so big. As far as I knew I was the first to sell computer games.
WW: What influenced you?
Scott: I loved to read science fiction. My heroes were Paul Anderson and Isaac Asimov.
WW: Do you still write adventures? And what is your opinion of the C64 and what I believe is known as the 'emulation scene'?
Scott: For its time, the C64 was revolutionary—fairly inexpensive for the power it gave. Regarding emulation, I think it gives many people a tie back to their earlier days. The games tended to grip them and keep them thinking. Many people have written and told me how my games changed their lives; many went into computer-related fields specifically because they played my games. I am always touched to hear such stories and to know I was a positive influence on people. I literally have thousands of fan emails I have collected over the years. Personally, I do not play old titles as I am always looking at newer games. Right now I am involved with the popular *MMORPG*, with Anarchy Online being my favourite. I tend to try most new games as they come out but the majority do not hold my interest for long.
WW: I have become aware of these games you mentioned, and they are of course nothing new; one of your earlier adventures (*Questprobe 3*) had a character-switching option—which could be seen as the originator of such features in future games.
Scott: Yes, it is a great feature and I enjoyed the extra dimension in *Questprobe 3* of requiring the player to finish the game properly. I was pleased to see others repeat it later, especially in *Day of the Tentacle* which I greatly enjoyed.
WW: However, compared to your contemporaries, your earlier games seemed very limited.
Scott: I found that most people tended to use two-letter word commands. Also, my games usually ran on platforms that the bigger Infocom games could not: they could be regarded as the short stories of the adventure game market, something you could finish in a week...

After Scott had recovered I whisked him back whence he came and sought a new subject—the authors of *Newcomer*. I briefly asked the crew how they compared the games of the past to those of the present.

Zoli: I was satisfied in the early days, but I am frustrated with what's published now. A lot of earlier games were pioneers, they established a lot of genres.
WW: What are your views upon emulation and the retro scene?
Zoli: Emulation is comfortable, even lazy. I rarely play old titles.
Holid: I do play old games. Do I have an alternative? I like computer games—and that, for me, manifests only in the golden oldies; even the PC had a golden era, say 1993-1997.
WW: It's a rarity today to produce a professionally-packaged 'commercial' game for the C64. How successful has it been?
Zoli: There's been a lot of interest, but as Appreciationware the game hasn't yielded too much money. We did sell an amazing amount of copies, however.
Holid: Hopefully the success will increase further, although I don't think any more titles for the C64 will be made by me.

A hush descended. The crew gaped, and sailed silently away. Technically, a lot has changed—but the gameplay itself less so. It seems that the adventurer is still the most important part of any adventure; and it is in his mind, not on the screen, where the journey takes place. I will continue to teach my minions in the hope that they will listen. If not, I will turn them into frogs.

Until next time...


Coming
June
2002
remix64
http://remix64.phatsites.de

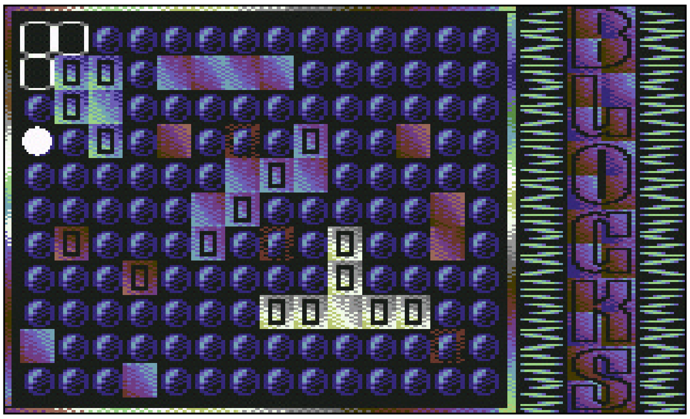
COMING SOON TO A MONITOR NEAR YOU

Zzap! 107's ringleader is a man who claims to be descended from Oompa-Loompas. Despite this affliction, Gazunta manages to peer into his crystal ball, where he spies the future of Commodore gaming.

Last year saw plenty of new games hit the C64 scene. Next year looks like it's going to even better for the world's greatest retro gaming machine, as expert coders and artists alike are pushing the hardware well beyond its supposed limits. Here's a quick peek at the hot software you should watch out for over the next few months.

First off, we have *Blocks*. It's a puzzle game whose formula will be familiar to fans of *Soko-Ban*: push objects to their destination through a series of fiendishly-constructed mazes. The early build looks great, with very attractive graphics, excellent level design, and good, old-fashioned addictive gameplay. If there's any criticism to make, it's that the time limit is too strict even for people who know how to solve each stage.

No good game is complete without a sequel—or so say the creators of *It's Magic 2*. It's the follow up (strangely enough) to *It's Magic*, reviewed on page 24. Protovision promises that it will address the concerns about the first game and make the platform-jumping action even better this time around. The graphics have certainly taken a step forward,





• ***It's Magic 2*** **should be an improvement on its slightly iffy predecessor**

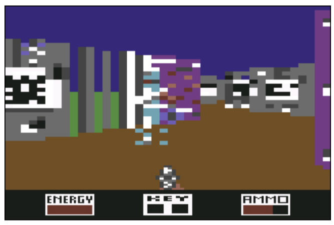


with colourful backgrounds, well animated sprites, and less 'borrowing' from certain other titles. Will the mighty *Mayhem In Monsterland* finally be ousted from the C64 platform game throne? We shall see...

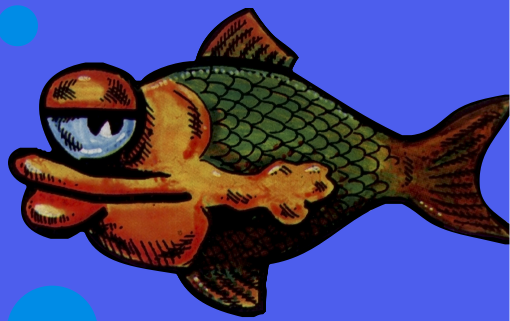
Balloonancy takes its inspiration from Infogrames' *Bubble Ghost*. Somewhat unusually, its hero is a small sheet of plastic tied into a ball and filled with air. For reasons best known to itself, this balloon-like thing must negotiate a passage through sixteen danger-filled rooms, finding and activating switches that open exits to the next stage. Many sharp objects litter each screen, contact with any of which leaves you feeling seriously deflated. Early impressions are that this is a solid (if potentially repetitive) action title packed with cute and colourful graphics.

Finally, we have a game that's been promised since 1998, but which we're now assured really will turn up this year. It's called *Mood*, and it's from the we're-doing-this-just-to-prove-it-can-be-done school of programming. As the name suggests, it's based on id's PC classic, *Doom*: players collect beefy weapons, blast beefier monsters, and spend a lot of time exploring the pseudo-3D environment. Like *Doom*, it's a true first-person shooter, too. On the C64. (Yes, that is pretty amazing.) Certainly the graphics could do with tidying up, and there needs to be more variety, but it's still a remarkable technical achievement that shows great potential.

Sounds pretty good, right? You bet. As the C64 turns 20 this year (feeling old yet?), there are still plenty of neat games to look forward to. Keep your eyes peeled for full reviews in the next issue of Zzap!64. If there is one. (*Cue spooky music and maniacal laughter, fading enigmatically into the starless night...*)



Oh no, it's...



As an international piscine megastar, I am often called upon to host events as disparate as the Global Baleen Festival and the Plankton Society Preservation Dinner. Nonetheless, unlike most fish, I have not forgotten my past. I remember well the first time that I—a young haddock fresh from the North Sea—arrived at the mysterious and decidedly dry building called Zzap! Towers. Very soon I would run the entire organisation, but first I had to negotiate the steps... (*Get on with it! –Ed.*) So, without further ado, here in alphabetical order are the people who have contributed to this magazine. They come from all over the globe—the UK, USA, Australia, Pakistan and Holland—to take part in this truly outstanding project. I raise my fins to you, new Zzapers!

CHRIS ABBOTT

Chris is the owner of **C64Audio.com**, a C64 music website and record label, and initiated the C64 remix CD movement with the original *Back in Time* album. He was also responsible for *Back in Time Live*, the biggest gathering of C64 musicians ever.



MAT ALLEN

A seventeen-year C64 veteran, Mat has written reviews for Oracle, and created the Mayhem in Monsterland website (**www.geocities.com/MotorCity/4393/**). He is currently suffering from a severe case of cart-collectivitis due to eBay over-exposure.

IAIN BLACK



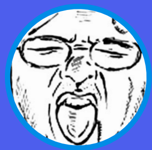
Webmaster of the totally excellent Def Guide to Zzap!64 (**www.zzap64.co.uk**), Iain began with Issue 41 and stayed until the bitter end. He lists his interests as: “travelling, music, and creating Web pages (and then not updating them often enough)”.



LEE BOLTON

Lee is a huge C64 and classic video game fan, and the creator of the PeeknPoke website (**http://peeknpoke.emucamp.com**). When he's not immersed in *Half Life* or *Uridium*, he's often found enjoying a movie. Seminal classic *Star Wars* and various Woody Allen flicks have a regular home in his DVD player.

CAMERON DAVIS



“Gazunta” read his first Issue (37) many years ago, and realised that he too wanted to be paid to play and write about games all day. Now a tired old hack, he started this project to help keep the C64 scene alive and pay homage to the world's greatest-ever gaming magazine.



PAUL GLANCEY

Paul was one of Zzap!'s best and most modest staff writers. He spent a total of ten years as a games journalist before becoming the Game Evaluator at Eidos, and is now Creative Manager at Criterion Games where he oversaw Sony's PS2 title, *Airblade*.

CRAIG GRANNELL



Art guy Craig is a digital artist and musician who did all the design for this issue of Zzap!64. His own work can be found at **www.snubcommunications.com**. He is also a world-famous pop-star in his spare time (**www.vmuonline.com**).

ANDY HAYWOOD



“Mackoman” has owned a C64 since way back in 1984, and discovered the wonders of Zzap! at Issue 10. He still hasn't forgiven Andrew Braybrook for the Amiga conversion of *Paradroid*, though the classic C64 version remains his favourite game of all time.

CRAIG HESMONDHALGH

Our resident adventurer hails from Lancashire, and is currently studying for an MA in English and Comparative Parser Analysis.

ROBIN HOGG



Mr Pig-in-a-Poke abandoned the murky world of computer gaming to be an environmental engineer on aerospace products. He's now married, and a father, and very happy...

GORDON HOUGHTON



Former Zzap! editor, fat man and fish breeder, Gordon likes nothing better than lying to people about his age. He now inhabits The Burrow (**www.the-burrow.freeserve.co.uk**), a website which is dedicated entirely to the promotion of his novels through various underhand means.

DEMETRIUS KIMINAS

Our screenshot specialist was born in Piraeus, Greece in 1972 and is a scholar of Byzantine history (specializing in the Orthodox Patriarchates). He is a member of Gamebase64, an ambitious project that aims to collect every C64 game ever made and make them all available for download. He is also webmaster of the project's site at **www.gamebase64.com**.

the ZZAP! 64 #107 hall of fame!



JASON MACKENZIE



"Kenz" is still running Binary Zone, and generally flying the flag for the C64. He's also working for **C64Audio.com**, as well as running **bouff.tv**—the official Emily Booth online store.

LLOYD MANGRAM

A founder member of the Shropshire Pipe and Port Society, Lloyd has been a stalwart of Zzap!'s letters page since the very first issue. He claims this Rrap is positively his last, and plans to spend his retirement playing the pink oboe.



PAUL E. MORRISON

Originally hailing from the north-east of England, Paul moved to the USA when he married an American. He's now a full time dad to his one-year-old son, and has been a C64 fan for over sixteen years.

UMER PASHA



The man from Pakistan claims to have been playing games since he was in nappies. He's written articles for local magazines since his teens, and currently works as a development manager for a healthcare-related software firm.

WARREN PILKINGTON



Loads of Waz's tips have been published in both Zzap!64 and Commodore Format, and from 1996-2001 he had his own tips section in Commodore Zone. He's also the administrator of the High Voltage SID Collection (**www.hvsc.c64.org**) and provides informative liner notes for C64-based CDs such as the *Back in Time* series and Reyn Ouwehand's *Nexus 6581*.

MAFF RIGNALL

In his own words, Maff is: Reflective. Cognitive. Sullen. Fragile. Accommodating. Reliable. Tangible. Feasible. Peachy. Tangy. Chewy. Gluten free. Biodegradable. Open Source. Standards compliant. Emotional. Dissonant. Post-rock. Slo-core. Amnesiac. Dysfunctional. Paisley. Moody. Froody. Glancey. *Wizball*.

ANTHONY STILLER



The creator of our new set of reviewer heads, Ant is a 30-year-old Australian chappie who lovingly describes his homeland as "a land of venomous everything". He claims that he wasted his youth on *Bard's Tale*, Jeff Minter's classic blast 'em up *Gridrunner*, and the epic trading game *Elite*. He's partial to a bit of Pink Floyd, Tolkien, *D&D* and spaghetti, is inspired by Alex Ross and Oli Frey, and claims that he is "honoured to be here."

STEPHEN STUTTARD



A Zzap! reader from Issue 2, Mort has owned various Commodore machines since 1983. His favourite games include *Wizball* and *Revs*, and he's also responsible for supplying almost the entire set of scanned issues found on the Def Guide to Zzap!64.

PAUL SUMNER

Zzap!'s longest-serving reviewer has lived in Ludlow all his life, though he was spotted as far afield as Craven Arms a few years back. Since Issue 106, he has dabbled in coprophilia, but ferret-breeding remains his real passion.

ANDREW WILLIAMS

Take it away, Andrew: "Got my first C64 in 1983 after owning a VIC 20 for three days. Saw Sex Pistols live in 1996. Provided *Wizball* joke for first *BiT* CD. Met Douglas Adams in 1998. Still believe in Lloyd Mangram. Type with two fingers—not my own."



ROBERT DE VOOGD

Biggest Jim is a website manager, and the proud father of a one-year-old boy, Casper. (See, son, your old man even wrote for Zzap!—those were the days...). He has been addicted to the magazine since Issue 17, and has stayed faithful to his C128 since 1986.



That's all, folks!

That's your lot, fish fanciers. Almost two dozen staff worked their fins off for five months to bring you Zzap! 107—and I think I can say without fear of being battered that we've all had a whale of a time. Frankly, though, I've haddock enough. I'm returning to the North Sea, where I'll be indulging in a bottom-feeding frenzy with the rest of the Gadidae family. Speaking of which, I might even visit some of my three million kids, and tell them fishy tales of a once-great Commodore 64 magazine and its shoals of devoted fans. Or maybe I'll just stuff my face with marine invertebrates. Either way, I'm swishing off now, and I'd advise you to do the same. It's no good hanging around here, hoping page 37 will turn up—it's just not going to happen... So long, and thanks for all the plankton.

Ken D. Fish

If you thought you knew Commodore 64 music: THINK AGAIN!



Latest Release:
Back in Time 3
A Space Odyssey

"Back in Time 3 is a combination of skilled music and attention to detail that leaves no corners cut"
-Shark, INC Press

C64AUDIO.COM: Home of the "Back in Time" C64 CDs!